



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**INTRODUCING THE FUTURE NOW: USING MEMETICS  
AND POPULAR CULTURE TO IDENTIFY THE POST 9/11  
HOMELAND SECURITY ZEITGEIST**

by

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March 2008

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**INTRODUCING THE FUTURE NOW: USING MEMETICS AND POPULAR  
CULTURE TO IDENTIFY THE POST 9/11 HOMELAND SECURITY ZEITGEIST**

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(HOMELAND SECURITY AND DEFENSE)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

What effect did the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, have on American culture? One outcome was the emergence of “homeland security” as a new institution, concept, and method. But what does this mean as part of a broader historical narrative of cultural change following 9/11? This thesis uses a combination of both classic and contemporary theories to gain perspective on how the public perceives homeland security—Zeitgeist theory and memetics. By examining small clues found within American popular culture, called memes, the reader is able to see how ideas related to homeland security have been transmitted, varied, or faded away. What may appear to be random events found in American popular culture can be considered part of a larger dynamic at work called the “Zeitgeist” and may provide the first glimpse into a future that “currently exists, but is just not widely distributed yet.” The themes found within the homeland security Zeitgeist—patriotism, victimization, fear, and absurdity—provide insight into how Americans perceive homeland security and awareness of emerging cultural patterns that affect their lives. Opportunities for further research are suggested related to cultural evolution, memetics, popular culture analysis, strategic communications, and homeland security.

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## I. INTRODUCING THE FUTURE

“The future is here. It’s just not widely distributed yet.”

--William Gibson, *Pattern Recognition*

*The plane was 20 minutes late when it pulled up to the gate at Reagan National Airport in Washington, DC. As soon as the captain turned off the fasten seatbelt sign, John Smith put his suit jacket on, adjusted the American flag pin on his lapel, grabbed his carry-on bag from the overhead bin, and then followed the other passengers off the plane. A frequent business traveler, the announcement repeated overhead every few minutes throughout the terminal hardly even registered with him anymore: “The Department of Homeland Security has determined the threat level to be ELEVATED. Please keep all bags with you and report any suspicious packages to the nearest airport employee.” He hailed a cab and was home within 20 minutes, delayed only by a random security checkpoint set up by the Capitol Police Department on one of the main traffic arteries around the Capitol building.*

*As he entered their townhouse, his wife Joan was on the phone cheerfully discussing an upcoming visit with family members. She looked at the calendar hanging on the kitchen wall, then penciled a note in one of the blocks. The days of the month were arranged neatly below a large picture of three dusty firemen hoisting an American flag while surrounded by the debris of the World Trade Center.<sup>1</sup>*

*Later that evening, John and Joan settled on the couch to watch one of their favorite television shows on the Fox network, ‘24.’ It was the middle of the show’s fifth season and its hero, Jack Bauer, was desperately trying to save America again within a twenty-four hour period. This episode brought a new twist: at the direction of the President, the Central Intelligence Agency’s Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) located in Los Angeles was just taken over by the Department of Homeland Security. After the show ended, the couple discussed their plans for the next day and agreed to meet after work*

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<sup>1</sup> The image referred to is called “Raising the Flag at Ground Zero,” taken by Thomas Franklin for *The Record*, (Bergen County, NJ).

*and walk together to the Neighborhood Watch meeting. Joan worked for the Department of Homeland Security's Citizen Corps and would be speaking at the meeting about preparing for a pandemic flu outbreak. John activated the security alarm for the house and the couple turned in for the evening.*

For many Americans, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, (hereinafter called "9/11") represent a cataclysmic event that will be forever etched in their minds.<sup>2</sup> Ask people what they were doing when they heard the news of the attacks and they can usually recall details with great clarity, not unlike previous generations who remember the exact moment they heard that President John F. Kennedy or Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., was shot. The world gathered around television screens and watched in shock as the horror unfolded: the images of commercial airliners converted into missiles, the implosion and collapse of enormous skyscrapers into a cloud of dust, the smoke and blackened walls of the Pentagon, and the complete disintegration of a jumbo airliner in a farmer's field in Pennsylvania. Nothing on this scale had ever been seen by television viewers before that was not part of a fictional movie or television show. This was something different—something so real it was almost surreal, and in the immediate hours and days after the attacks there was a strong sense that life would never be quite the same as before 9/11.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most obvious changes in America following 9/11 was the introduction of a new concept for the American public—homeland security. However, trying to find a comprehensive definition of homeland security is like trying to find the squaring of a circle. Although the words are pervasive throughout American discourse, its meaning is evasive. Most Americans were first introduced to the term during President George W. Bush's address to a special joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001. In this speech, President Bush stated that since the attacks of 9/11:

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<sup>2</sup> Harry Levins, "None of Us Will Ever Forget This Day," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 12, 2001, <http://www.september11news.com/USAPapers3.htm> (accessed May 27, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Frank Lewis, ed., "Nothing Will Ever Be the Same," *Philadelphia City Paper*, September 11, 2001, extra edition, <http://www.september11news.com/USAPapers3.htm> (accessed May 27, 2007).

Our nation has been put on notice: We are not immune from attacks. We will take defensive measures against terrorism to protect Americans. Today, dozens of federal departments and agencies, as well as state and local governments, have responsibilities affecting homeland security. These efforts must be coordinated at the highest level. So tonight I announce the creation of a Cabinet-level position reporting directly to me—the Office of Homeland Security.”<sup>4</sup>

An official federal government definition of homeland security was promulgated approximately ten months later when the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* was released, describing it as: “a concerted national effort to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce America’s vulnerability to terrorism, and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur.”<sup>5</sup> Since Bush’s address to Congress, the term “homeland security” has been used thousands of times by federal, state, tribal and local government officials in speeches to the public, testimony to the Congress, reports, regulations, and policy documents. The homeland security business has now eclipsed mature enterprises like movie-making and the music industry in annual revenue, with an estimated \$59 billion dollars expected to be spent worldwide by government and businesses in 2007 alone.<sup>6</sup> And yet, when asked what homeland security means, scholars and lay-people alike often have difficulty providing a precise and inclusive definition.

This difficulty may be attributed in part to the variety of forces at play—perceiving risk, understanding vulnerability, expectations of privacy, and patriotism, just to name a few. But less obvious may be the fact that beyond the official government documents and speeches, homeland security has crept into other aspects of daily life in America—from bestselling novels to chart-topping songs to prime time television shows. Are homeland security strategies having their intended effect within this whirlpool of competing ideas? Are there cultural patterns emerging related to homeland security that

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People” (Washington DC: The White House, September 20, 2001) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html> (accessed March 9, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, (Washington DC: The White House, July 2002) <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS20641> (accessed January 28, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Gary Stoller, “Homeland Security Generates Multibillion Dollar Business,” USA Today.com, [http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/2006-09-10-security-industry\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/2006-09-10-security-industry_x.htm) (accessed December 9, 2007).

affect the lives of citizens within America? With the security of our nation and billions of dollars at stake, it is critical for homeland security officials and the public to understand the larger dynamic at work within American culture.

## II. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Six years after the attacks may still be too soon to see the full extent of how the events of that day have transformed America. It is not until we can gain some perspective to the events of 9/11 that its place within a larger historical context may be fully realized. However, taking a cue from the author William Gibson, we need not be bystanders to the parade of history. In the fictional vignette above, the experiences of John and Joan Smith can seem like everyday life in America, somewhat random and sometimes coincidental. But it is also possible to view these seemingly unrelated events, along with a “thousand small clues” found across the spectrum of American society, as part of a historical narrative of cultural change following the terrorist attacks of 9/11.<sup>7</sup> This thesis argues that by approaching homeland security from the point of view of memetics and Zeitgeist theory, we can become historical detectives, combing through the evidence of events that are unfolding around us, looking to see if it is true that “the shape of things to come is already implicit in a thousand small clues” before, “in a sudden shift of mindset, it becomes obvious to everyone.”<sup>8</sup>

This study uses a combination of both classic and contemporary theories to gain perspective on how the public perceives homeland security: Zeitgeist theory and memetics. Both will be explored in more detail later, but by way of introduction, *Zeitgeist* is a German expression loosely translated to mean “the spirit of the time.” With the spirit, or *Geist*, manifesting itself in all aspects of human experience, a Zeitgeist theory of cultural evolution posits that the Zeitgeist serves as a mirror that reflects the essence of what makes us humans at a particular period of socio-cultural progression.<sup>9</sup> Zeitgeist theory is a useful way to understand history through the gathering together of otherwise disparate influences, sensibilities, beliefs, and cultural artifacts, and find in them a

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<sup>7</sup> Tim O'Reilly, O'Reilly Emerging Technologies Conference May 13-16, 2002, “Keynote: The Shape of Things to Come,” [http://www.oreillynet.com/et2002/view/e\\_sess/2452](http://www.oreillynet.com/et2002/view/e_sess/2452) (accessed May 27, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel,” <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel/> (accessed March 9, 2007).

common theme or spirit. It cannot give a definitive or absolute answer on what matters and does not matter in a culture, nor does it claim to. The value of Zeitgeist theory lies in its ability to allow us to observe a theme or spirit as it manifests itself and then classify it appropriately.

The challenge associated with applying Zeitgeist theory is determining how to systematically identify manifestations of the Geist. This is where the contemporary concept of the meme proves useful. A meme is a cultural element or behavioral trait whose transmission and consequent persistence in a population, although occurring by non-genetic means (especially imitation), is considered analogous to the inheritance of a gene.<sup>10</sup> The term was originally coined in 1976 by biologist Richard Dawkins in his book, *The Selfish Gene*.<sup>11</sup> Since then, the field of memetics (the theoretical and empirical science that studies the replication, spread and evolution of memes) has grown rapidly as a way to understand the complexities of cultural evolution. Memes can be almost any cultural entity: language, fashions, songs, scientific theories, habits, skills, stories, or any other kind of information that is copied from person to person.<sup>12</sup> According to memetics, our minds and cultures are designed by Darwinian natural selection principles acting on memes, just as organisms are designed by natural selection acting on genes.

This thesis examines American culture for memes relating to the events of 9/11. It is well beyond the scope of this thesis to complete a comprehensive assessment of the entire breadth of the philosophical, sociological and technological strata of American culture. Therefore, it will focus on the sociological stratum, and in particular, that part of the stratum referred to as “popular culture.” The first step of this assessment will be identifying original memes related to homeland security that were introduced into popular culture by the words and actions of government officials. Next, the following aspects of popular culture will be surveyed to find evidence of homeland security memes, either in their original form or varied in some fashion: best-selling books, prime-time

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<sup>10</sup> “Meme,” Oxford English Dictionary Online, <http://dictionary.oed.com> (accessed November 20, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

<sup>12</sup> Susan Blackmore, “About Memes,” <http://www.susanblackmore.co.uk/memetics/about%20memes.htm> (accessed November 20, 2007).

television, music, and images. Once identified, these memes will be assessed to see if collectively they may present a manifestation of a homeland security Zeitgeist. And finally, now aware of a homeland security Zeitgeist, the thesis will discuss whether it might prove a useful paradigm for understanding how American culture adapts to an event such as 9/11.

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### III. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

While there is extensive literature on historical analysis, cultural studies, and memetics, there is very little research on the concept of applying memetics or Zeitgeist theory to cultural evolution for homeland security purposes. This section will explore the concepts and theories that will help the reader understand what a Zeitgeist is and how it may manifest itself through memes in American popular culture following 9/11. After defining culture and reviewing the basics of cultural evolution, the reader will be introduced to the basics of mass communication through signs and words, followed by an overview of memetics and Zeitgeist theory.

#### A. DEFINING CULTURE

In order to analyze the American cultural response following 9/11, it is necessary first to define culture as it is used within the context of this thesis and then refine this broad concept in a more precise definition of “popular culture.” There is no shortage of definitions of culture to consider. In 1952, Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn compiled a list of 164 definitions in *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* and many more have been added since then to reflect new theories of understanding human activity.<sup>13</sup> Despite all the variations, scholars generally agree that culture has at least two main characteristics: it is shared and it is learned.<sup>14</sup> After reviewing the numerous definitions available, the following definition was selected for its usefulness in helping the reader understand this thesis: “Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived

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<sup>13</sup> A.L. Kroeber and C.Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Peabody Museum of American Archeology and Ethnology Papers, 1952), 47.

<sup>14</sup> A.C. Cargile, “Testing a New Measure of Culture: The Mainstream American Scale,” Paper presented at the International and Intercultural Division of the National Communication Association convention, Chicago, IL, November 1999. As quoted in Christine Ersig-Marcus “Understanding Culture as Communication: An Exploratory Study of U.S. TV Commercials,” Master’s Thesis, California State University, Long Beach, August 2001.

and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action."<sup>15</sup> In short, culture may be understood as the “collective mental programming” among people.<sup>16</sup>

Cultural theorists attempt to understand the complexities within a particular culture. Marxist cultural theory has had the most lasting impact on contemporary culture studies. The Marxist method explores the politics of mass culture for dual purposes: (1) to see how there may be express or perhaps latent reflections of modes of material production, ideological values, class relations and structures of social power (racial, sexual, and politico-economic) or (2) the state of consciousness of people in a precise historical or socio-economic situation.<sup>17</sup> As a result of this analysis, society was generally divided into two great social classes, the bourgeoisie (or upper and middle classes) who own and control the means of producing economic survival, and the proletariat (or working class) who manage to sustain their existence by working for the bourgeoisie.<sup>18</sup>

This Marxist method, coupled with structuralism and semiology, reveals political significance in every facet of contemporary culture, including films, television, newspaper and magazine articles, comics, fashion, and so on.<sup>19</sup> Social theorists have gone one step further and applied this Marxist class approach to make a distinction in contemporary culture between “high” and “low” culture. The status or social standing of the bourgeoisie is enhanced through claims that its culture is superior and thus represents the greatest artistic and literary achievements of a society. Typically, “high” cultural forms such as ballet, opera, classical music, public television and classics of literature were considered reserved for the wealthy and educated class, and “low culture” are those

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<sup>15</sup> Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *Culture*, 47.

<sup>16</sup> G. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences* (Abridged Edition), (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1984), 16.

<sup>17</sup> Donald Lazere, “Mass Culture, Political Consciousness, and English Studies,” *College English* 38, no. 8 (Apr. 1977): 755.

<sup>18</sup> Sociology Central.org, “High and Low Culture” (United Kingdom: Sociology Central, n.d.), <http://www.sociology.org.uk/p2t3a.htm> (accessed June 14, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Lazere, “Mass Culture,” 755.

forms of culture produced and consumed by “the masses,” such as certain forms of television like soap operas, game shows, comic books, and the movies.

By the 1930s, “low culture” was also referred to as “mass culture,” and cultural critics such as those in the “Frankfurt School” focused attention on the role of modern mass culture as a key agency of ideological hegemony.<sup>20</sup> The Frankfurt School critics, who included Max Horkheimer, Erich Fromm, Leo Lowenthal, and Herbert Marcuse, observed that twentieth century mass culture had surpassed the church and was now challenging the family and state as one of the most stabilizing forces within a society.<sup>21</sup> This line of reasoning represents a shift from class to ideology as the central dividing ground within a culture. The distinction between the two forms has continued to blur, especially in recent years with the explosion in scholarship about “popular culture.”

*Reader's Digest* introduced the heading “Popular Culture” for the first time in 1960, and in 1969 the Popular Culture Association and the *Journal of Popular Culture* was established.<sup>22</sup> There was a wave of counter-elite writings that started to portray popular culture as a rejection of the highbrow, middlebrow, and lowbrow culture.<sup>23</sup> However, like the term culture, there has been no singular, widely-accepted definition of popular culture. Some definitions appear to be a modern restatement of Marxist class theory, where popular culture includes “everything except the particular interests of the most educated and affluent members of society, whose tastes we refer to as high culture.”<sup>24</sup> Other definitions are more closely aligned with the Zeitgeist theory introduced earlier, describing popular culture as “the shared knowledge and practices of a specific group at a specific time” which both reflects and influences people's way of life but also is transitory, subject to change, and often an initiator of change.<sup>25</sup> What these definitions

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<sup>20</sup> Lazere, “Mass Culture,” 756.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Marshall Fishwick, *Popular Culture: Cavespace to Cyberspace* (New York: The Haworth Press, 1999), 23.

<sup>23</sup> Lazere, “Mass Culture,” 752.

<sup>24</sup> Janice Neulib, Kathleen Shine Cain, Stephen Ruffus, Maurice Scharter, *The Mercury Reader: A Custom Publication Compiled by the University of New Mexico* (Boston: Pearson, 2001), 97.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Petracca and Madeleine Sorapure, *Common Culture*, Fourth ed. (Upper Saddle River: Pearson, 2004), 4.

have in common is that they all require the analyst to consider the complex dynamics of individual, family, language, nationalities, communities, and other forces into popular cultural analysis.<sup>26</sup>

The concept of popular culture as a reflection of society is the most common thread that runs through the varying definitions found in textbooks, encyclopedias, and scholarship and best articulated in Michael T. Marsden's introduction to the *Arizona English Bulletin* issue on *Popular Culture and the Teaching of English*:

If Popular Culture is a reflection of our society, as indeed it is, then the products it produces can be said to be mirrors of that society. The mirrored images may be somewhat distorted, but the image will generally be accurate. We can know a people by what they consume, and we are what we enjoy!<sup>27</sup>

Consistent with this approach, the following definition of popular culture will be used for this thesis: "A system of shared and learned symbols and meanings, especially values, that is subject to change, and often an initiator of change."

## **B. CULTURAL EVOLUTION THEORY**

For the hundred years following the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, cultural anthropologists spurned the idea that evolution could make any meaningful contribution to their field. Notable critics included Berthold Laufer, Melville Herskovits, and Franz Boas. There was a discernable shift in this attitude fostered principally by the numerous celebrations and academic discussions surrounding the Darwin Centennial in 1959.<sup>28</sup> Academics realized that while cultural theory provides a way to understand the complexities found within a culture, cultural evolutionary theory can assist in understanding the proximate mechanisms that drive cultural change over

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<sup>26</sup> Fishwick, *Popular Culture*, xii, 18.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Lazere, "Mass Culture," 753.

<sup>28</sup> Marshall D. Sahlins and Elman R. Service, eds., *Evolution and Culture*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1973), vii-viii. As an aside, one possible explanation for this shift is that it is a result of the Scientific Zeitgeist discussed earlier in this paper.

some period of time.<sup>29</sup> As an extension of the field of cultural anthropology, cultural evolution theory is essentially “the science of the science.” This theoretical approach looks at (1) changes in specific forms of culture (specific evolution) or (2) a grand movement in a certain direction with changes in form following in that direction (general evolution).<sup>30</sup>

As cultural evolution theory developed, the academic debate centered on whether specific versus general evolution is the most accurate measure of evolution. However, as Marshall Sahlins and Elman Service suggested in their ground-breaking work, *Evolution and Culture*, the better question to ask is which is more *useful* as a method to understand cultural evolution. From their perspective, it is the general evolution approach offered by Julian Huxley or Alfred Lotka which has the most usefulness.<sup>31</sup> The general evolution approach has since gained favor, in large part due to the early writing of Leslie White and later application by Marshall Sahlins.

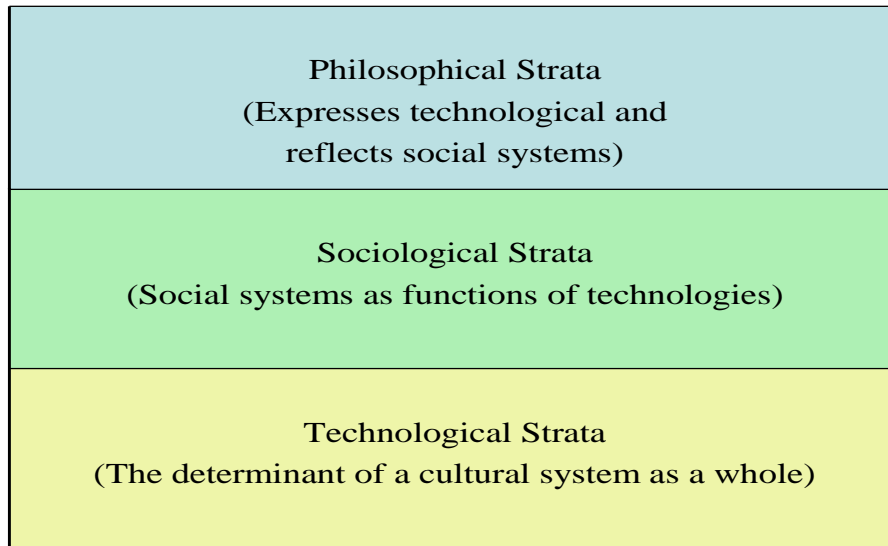
Anthropologist Leslie White’s writings about cultural organization were out of step with the leading cultural anthropologists of his time, but have since become the foundation of American anthropological studies. By distinguishing “history” from “evolution,” White presents a theory of cultural evolution that is not tied to any particular time or place. White identified three distinct strata in culture in which cultural systems operate (Figure 1).

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<sup>29</sup>Brian Paciotti, Peter J. Richerson, Robert Boyd, “Cultural Evolutionary Theory: A Synthetic Theory for Fragmented Disciplines,” in *Bridging Social Psychology: The Benefits of Transdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. P.A.M. Van Lange (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006) <http://www.des.ucdavis.edu/faculty/richerson/Bridging%20final.pdf> (accessed June 20, 2007).

<sup>30</sup> Sahlins and Service, *Evolution and Culture*, 6.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.



**Figure 1. White's Cultural System (After 32.).**

This strength of this approach is that the scientist can theoretically identify the forces that are driving cultural changes for further analysis in a closed, controlled environment. When this closed system is opened to the unpredictable influence of a particular environment, such as American popular culture after 9/11, the result is the production of an organized cultural whole that integrates technology, sociology, and ideology.<sup>32</sup> This process of social strata adapting to environment is called cultural adaptation.

Marshall Sahlins and Elman Service built upon the theoretical foundation laid by White to identify bedrock principles for cultural evolution theory:

- Any given system, whether a species, a culture, or an individual, increases its chance of survival by specialized adaptation (this is known as specific evolution). Systems are assigned stages of progress irrespective of phylogenetic relationships (this is known as general evolution).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Sahlins and Service, *Evolution and Culture*, 47-48.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 94-95.

- Specific evolution has a limiting factor called the Principle of Stabilization, which is that a culture at rest tends to stay at rest and maintain the status quo.<sup>34</sup>
- The study of the evolution of culture enables us to forecast the future.<sup>35</sup>

Under the influence of Darwinian evolutionary theory, social scientists continued to study how a variety of phenomena, such as language, science and technology, and economic organizations and institutions, affected cultural transmission, variation and selection.<sup>36</sup>

### C. DEVELOPING VISUAL INTELLIGENCE: SEMIOTICS, SEMANTICS, HERMENEUTICS, AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS

In 1915, American poet Vachel Lindsay wrote that with its numerous visual images, signs, and symbols, America was becoming an increasingly “hieroglyphic civilization.”<sup>37</sup> This characterization is even more appropriate today. Ann Marie Seward Barry argues that we live in a culture in which:

Visual communication dominates every area of our lives...[yet] increasingly, we are a nation of watchers rather than discriminating readers, of instant believers rather than reflective, visually aware critics. We must also exercise our critical function to detect how we can be moved—that is, driven to thought or action through our emotions—through a deliberate manipulation of images for commercial, social, or political purposes.<sup>38</sup>

This critical function has been described by Barry as *visual intelligence*, which implies “not only the skilled use of visual reasoning to read and to communicate, but also a holistic integration of skilled verbal and visual reasoning, from an understanding of how

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<sup>34</sup> Sahlins and Service, *Evolution and Culture*, 54.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>36</sup> Marion Blute, “Memetics and Evolutionary Social Science,” *Journal of Memetics-Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission* 19 (2005), [http://jom-emit.cfpm.org/2005/vol9/blute\\_m.html](http://jom-emit.cfpm.org/2005/vol9/blute_m.html) (accessed November 20, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Warren Susman, “‘Personality’ and the Making of Twentieth Century Culture,” *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), xvii.

<sup>38</sup> Ann Marie Seward Barry, *Visual Intelligence: Perception, Image, and Manipulation in Visual Communication* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 2-3, 9.

the elements that compose mining in images can be manipulated to distort reality, to the utilization of the visual in abstract thought.”<sup>39</sup> Visual intelligence can be gained through an understanding of the scientific study of semiology, semantics, and hermeneutics, as well as the impact of emotion on perception, which will be described in more detail below.

## 1. Semiology

The study of signs and symbols, both individually and grouped into sign systems is called semiology. The field of semiology is rich in literature, with its beginnings in the early writings of Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine and more contemporary philosophers and psychologists such as Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes, Charles Morris, and Umberto Eco.<sup>40</sup> Central to semiology is the study of how meaning is constructed and understood. What may be perceived as reality may in fact be projection of our individual and collective symbol systems.<sup>41</sup> There are two dominant models of what constitutes a sign, based on the work of linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. Saussure developed a two-part model by which a sign can be described: the *signifier* and the *signified*.<sup>42</sup> A *signifier* is the form which the sign takes to represent a sound or an object, while the *signified* is the concept that the sound or object represents. For example, consider what happens when a person sees this sign on the door to a store.



The word **open** is the *signifier* and the *signified concept* is that the store is open for business. For Saussure, the *signifier* and the *signified* must go together in order for a sign

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<sup>39</sup> Barry, *Visual Intelligence*, 6.

<sup>40</sup> “Semiotics, Semiology,” The Literary Encyclopedia, <http://www.litencyc.com/php/topics.php?rec=true&UID=1001> (accessed June 14, 2007).

<sup>41</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 5.

<sup>42</sup> Daniel Chandler, “Semiotics for Beginners-Signs” <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem02.html> (accessed November 13, 2007).



to have meaning.<sup>43</sup> However, in order to rule out an arbitrary relationship, semioticians stress that this must be a conventional relationship, meaning, that it is dependent on social and cultural conventions.<sup>44</sup>

A contemporary of Saussure, Peirce developed his own three-part model for understanding signs:

- *Symbol/symbolic*: a mode in which the signifier does not resemble the signified and instead is understood based on conventional understanding (it must be learned, such as punctuation or traffic lights);
- *Icon/iconic*: a mode in which the signifier is perceived as resembling or imitating the signified (such as a portrait, cartoon, metaphors, and sound effects in a movie); and
- *Index/indexical*: a mode in which the signifier is not arbitrary but directly connected in some way to the signified and this link can be measured or inferred (e.g., signals such as a knock on the door, recordings such as a photograph or video, personal trademarks like handwriting or a catchphrase, or nature signs like thunder or smoke).<sup>45</sup>

These aspects are not mutually exclusive. For example, the sign below is often used in Western cultures to represent public restrooms, with the figure on the left representing men and the figure on the right representing women.



These may be considered iconic symbols because they generally resemble how a man and woman look when wearing historical modes of dress for men and women.

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<sup>43</sup> Daniel Chandler, "Semiotics for Beginners-Signs"  
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem02.html> (accessed November 13, 2007).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

However, as one semiotician has pointed out, for a sign to be truly iconic, it should be transparent to someone who has never seen it before.<sup>46</sup> In contemporary society, the symbol on the left could easily represent a man or a woman. It is therefore also a symbolic sign because it is the customary meaning given to these signs that helps us decode them.

## 2. Semantics and Hermeneutics

In addition to signs and images, language has powerful symbolic action. Closely related to semiology is the study of semantics (the aspects of meaning that are expressed in a language, code, or other form of representation of information) and hermeneutics (the development and study of theories of the interpretation and understanding of texts). Both fields of linguist theory are rich in critical writing from theorists like Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, Charles E. Osgood, David Kaplan, and Ferdinand de Saussure. Semantics incorporates mathematic logic systems as a means of discerning the meaning of sentences and the manner in which they are put together, with the end result of knowing what the world would be like if the sentence is true. For example consider the statement: *The computer developed a fault.* Mathematical reference markers are used to represent the computer (X) and the fault (Y), and then logic is applied to determine the possible ways these terms inter-relate when various conditions are applied, e.g., *not (for all (X, not (computer (X) and develop a fault (Y))))*.<sup>47</sup> Hence, it logically follows that the sentence “*A computer developed a fault.*” can be followed by: “*It was quickly repaired.*” but it is not logically possible to state: “*It isn't the case that every computer didn't develop a fault. It was quickly repaired.*” Applying semantics is a challenging task when applied to natural language, like English, with its complicated syntax and meaning based on the context of the situation. Hence, the important take-away from semantics for this thesis: specific language is often chosen

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<sup>46</sup> Guy Cook, *The Discourse of Advertising* (London: Routledge, 1992), 70.

<sup>47</sup> For an overview of the current research into semantics, see Stephen G. Pulman's essay “Semantics” found on the “Survey of the State of the Art in Human Language Technology” <http://cslu.cse.ogi.edu/HLTSurvey/ch3node7.html> (accessed November 13, 2007).

to achieve a desired effect on its audience. How the audience receives it is based largely on context, which leads to the field of hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics involves the study of how individuals understand linguistic and non-linguistic expressions.<sup>48</sup> The study of meaning has its origins in early Greek philosophy and has evolved as a distinct field of study ever since. A key shift in the field occurred in the eighteenth century when the German Romantic philosophers, such as Hans-Georg Gadamer, shifted the focus of attention from the question “How do we read?” to the broader issue of “How do we communicate?” Gadamer argued that the only way to answer that question and grasp the meaning of an action or statement was by relating it to the whole discourse or world-view from which it originates.<sup>49</sup> How we perceive a strand of human dialogue has as much to do with emotion as it does the cold hard logic of science. Ongoing research indicates that the part of our brain called the amygdala may serve as the crucial link between the mind and body, controlling our emotions without our awareness.<sup>50</sup> Our response to signs, language, and experiences, therefore, is “highly susceptible to emotional manipulation on an unconscious level, which in turn affects our conscious thinking.”<sup>51</sup> Specific elements in visual and audio-visual information presentations can be altered to provoke desired responses, such as lighting, accompanying sound, camera techniques, and the relative size of objects in relation to each other.

For example, consider whether you feel a different response between the first and second images below (Figures 2 and 3)<sup>52</sup>:

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<sup>48</sup> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “Hermeneutics,” first published November 9, 2005, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/> (accessed November 13, 2007).

<sup>49</sup> Richard Palmer, “The Relevance of Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics to Thirty-Six Topics or Fields of Human Activity,” Lecture delivered at the University of Illinois-Carbondale, April 1, 1999, <http://www.mac.edu/faculty/richardpalmer/relevance.html> (accessed June 15, 2007).

<sup>50</sup> Adam K. Anderson, “Feeling Emotional: the Amygdala Links Emotional Perception and Experience,” *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 207: 71-72.

<sup>51</sup> Barry, *Visual Intelligence*, 66.

<sup>52</sup> Ebrima G. Sankareh, “I Cry Freedom,” *The Gambia Echo*, [www.gambiaecho.com](http://www.gambiaecho.com) (accessed November 28, 2006). <http://www.thegambiaecho.com/Homepage/tabid/36/articleType/ArchiveView/month/11/year/2006/Default.aspx> (accessed January 30, 2008); *10SpeedBikes.com*, <http://mlander24.pages.web.com/>, (accessed February 1, 2008).



**Figure 2. Photograph of flying eagle (From 52.).**



**Figure 3. Image of flying eagle and American flag (From 52.).**

Next, open the link below in Figure 4 to watch the video “Where the Stars and Stripes and the Eagles Fly” and consider whether the addition of music affects your response to the image below<sup>53</sup>:

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<sup>53</sup> Shamarie, “Where the Stars and Stripes and the Eagles Fly,” YouTube.com, added September 1, 2006, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzV32-KBxyU> (accessed February 2, 2008).



[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrsLHS\\_oKFQ&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrsLHS_oKFQ&feature=related)

**Figure 4.** Screen shot and web link for the YouTube video “Where the Stars and Stripes and the Eagles Fly” (From 53.).

For many people, overlaying an image with cultural symbols such as the American flag or an icon like Abraham Lincoln sitting in repose in his memorial can increase the emotional effect of the message and result in a more positive response.<sup>54</sup> However, the impact of the images is heightened significantly through the strategic choice of music. In the video in Figure 4, the editor has maximized this emotional effect by combining select images with the music to stir feelings of patriotism and support for the military. Because we use images, symbols, and sound within a social structure of assigned meanings and associations (e.g., flag = patriotism), it is important to be aware that these elements may be intentionally altered or manipulated to achieve a desired impact.<sup>55</sup>

Analyzing how the news media intentionally select and use signs to construct a desired version of reality illustrates how this happens every day in America. Media scholar John Hartley explains this process in *Understanding Media*. The news media

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<sup>54</sup> Seward Barry, *Visual Intelligence*, 177.

<sup>55</sup> Kate Brigham, “Decoding Visual Language Elements in News Content,” thesis submitted May 20, 2002, Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, [www.katebrigham.com/thesis](http://www.katebrigham.com/thesis) (accessed November 12, 2007), 38.

generally present a story as a compelling narrative using four distinct “narrative moments” to add significance and meaning to events:

1. **Framing**—This occurs at the beginning of a story where the topic and its associated discourse are established.
2. **Focusing**—The significance of the event or events are explained.
3. **Realizing**—The topic is made ‘real’ by accessing voices that can help to verify the ‘reality’ of the news provider’s version of the story.
4. **Closing**—It is not about telling the end of the story; rather it is the closure of various possible interpretations of the event and the preference of just one ‘reading’ of it.<sup>56</sup>

The initial framing of the topic is especially important because it establishes the parameters of how we perceive and process the events.

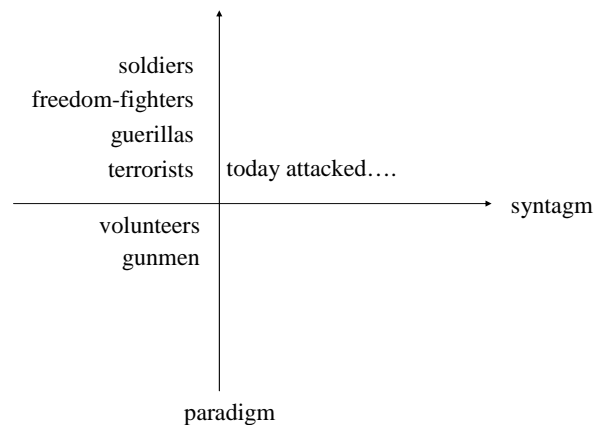
Typically, news narratives present a complex situation as a dichotomy of oppositional forces, such as ‘us vs. them’ or ‘good guy vs. bad guy,’ allowing the event and participants to be placed on one side or the other of these basic oppositional structures.<sup>57</sup> As discussed above, this dichotomy can be accomplished through the use of light, sound, and techniques, but also through the intentional choice of particular words. A simple two-axis relationship (Figure 5) illustrates how it is more likely that we will associate certain words with particular ideas over other words.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> John Hartley, *Understanding News* (London: Routledge, 1982), 118-19.

<sup>57</sup> Brigham, “Decoding Visual Language Elements, 64.

<sup>58</sup> Hartley, *Understanding News*, 20.



**Figure 5. John Hartley’s model of the paradigm and syntagm relationship (From 58.).**

The vertical axis represents the available word choices (the paradigm) and the horizontal axis is the way a word is chosen to complete a desired message (the syntagm).<sup>59</sup> There are a number of words available within the paradigm to select from when framing a story. If the intent is to complete a sentence “today attacked,” all of the words in the top left quadrant are much more likely to be associated with the syntagm because of the values we have been conditioned to associate with them. If instead the news media were to associate the word “terrorist” with a more positive association syntagm, such as “volunteered” or “liberated,” it would be inconsistent with the usual oppositional paradigm we are conditioned to expect.<sup>60</sup>

### **3. Mass Communications in the Post 9/11 World**

“Mass communications” generally describes the various means by which individuals and entities relay information to large segments of the population all at once.<sup>61</sup> During the twentieth century, mass communications generally included news

<sup>59</sup> Hartley, *Understanding News*, 21.

<sup>60</sup> Hartley, *Understanding News*, 21.

<sup>61</sup> Stanley J. Baran, *Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture*, Updated Media Enhanced Edition, (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 2004), 7.

media and advertising that occurred in a variety of forms: print, radio, television, and film. In this digital world with pervasive media, most Americans are aware to some degree of the amount of media manipulation that occurs. This awareness should also spread to what cultural critic Douglas Rushkoff described in 1994 as “the ever-expanding datasphere.”<sup>62</sup> The datasphere or “mediaspace” has become “the new territory for human interaction, economic expansion, and especially social and political machination.”<sup>63</sup> Rushkoff wrote this before the explosion of the Internet, making his observations resonate all the more because of the technological advances of the past decade. Now there is a global platform and a global audience for mass communications.

Using the Internet as a platform, individuals and organizations can quickly generate and disseminated content targeted at very specific or very broad audiences. Embracing the world wide web for its networking potential has been referred to more and more often as “Web 2.0.”<sup>64</sup> For instance, one can post digital photographs for anyone to view on [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com); share opinions through an online journal called a weblog; build an encyclopedia of knowledge through contributions posted on a “wiki”; host a conference call by dialing telephone numbers through a computer connection on Skype.com; or find a soul mate or that next job on social networking sites like LinkedIn.com, Facebook.com or MySpace.com. The potential of the Web 2.0 capabilities is just beginning to be understood but its application thus far has already demonstrated that if the arguments or video or photos or voice are compelling, eventually they will find an audience or it will find you.<sup>65</sup>

Of all the Web 2.0 capabilities, combining images with music and then posting a video on an Internet website like YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) may prove to be one of the most effective applications of mass communication strategy. With a home computer,

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<sup>62</sup> Douglas Rushkoff, *Media Virus* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994), 8.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>64</sup> Tim O'Reilly, “What is Web 2.0: Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software,” *O'Reilly*, <http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/oreilly/tim/news/2005/09/30/what-is-web-20.html> (accessed January 21, 2008).

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat*, Further Updated and Expanded Release 3.0 (New York: Picador/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, July 2007), 492.



off-the-shelf software, and some imagination, an individual can create a message that will be seen across the country and around the world in a matter of minutes. YouTube.com videos have already contributed to shaping the story of homeland security with hundreds of videos to watch. Some are more popular than others. According to YouTube, Brian Bezalel's video "9/11," set to Jewel's song "Hands," has been viewed over 4.8 million times since it was made available to the public on January 28, 2006 (Figure 6).<sup>66</sup>



[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDh\\_pvvtUM&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDh_pvvtUM&feature=related)

**Figure 6. Screenshot and web link for the YouTube Video "9/11" (From 66.).**

Other videos, such as "The Rainbow of Terror," (Figure 7) in which Kermit the Frog sings a song to teach children about the homeland security threat level, has only been viewed about 1,400 times.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Brian Bezalel, "9/11," www.youtube.com, 2003, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDh\\_pvvtUM&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDh_pvvtUM&feature=related) (accessed January 22, 2008).

<sup>67</sup> Johnny Walker and Eric Goscicki, "Rainbow of Terror," www.youtube.com, n.d., <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpJor2B11y0> (accessed January 22, 2008).



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PpJor2B11y0>

**Figure 7. Screen shot and web link for the YouTube Video "Rainbow Connection" (From 67.).**

These videos, along with hundreds of others related to homeland security topics, are available to anyone who has access to a computer. The ability of any person to post a video online is a revolution in the way ideas spread throughout society. Instead of the top-down approach to mass communications, where men in suits in office buildings decided what would be seen or heard the following day, there now exists what Douglas Rushkoff refers to as “participatory media.”<sup>68</sup> By working outside of the established media system, activists can engage in a grassroots culture where every type of viewpoint has an equal opportunity to be heard.

#### **D. MEMETICS**

A notable leap forward for cultural evolutionary theory occurred in 1976 when biologist Richard Dawkins introduced the idea of a “meme” (rhymes with ‘theme’) in his book, *The Selfish Gene*.<sup>69</sup> The fundamental unit of analysis in memetics is the meme-a

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<sup>68</sup> Rushkoff, *Playing the Future* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1999), 243.

<sup>69</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

self-reproducing and propagating unit of cultural information.<sup>70</sup> Dawkins was looking for a monosyllabic word to describe a replicator in human culture that acts in ways similar to the way a gene acts under evolutionary biology principles. He shortened the Greek word “mimeme” (which translates to “something imitated”) to “meme” because it sounded a bit like “gene” and could convey the idea of a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation.<sup>71</sup> Memes can be habits, skills, songs, stories, or any other kind of information that is copied from person to person.<sup>72</sup> Within a decade, a field of theoretical and empirical science emerged to study the replication, spread, and evolution of memes, called memetics.

At its most basic level, memetic theory posits that people are the hosts and transmitters of memes, which may be passed from person to person through text, voice, image, or sound. At times this transmission may occur rapidly, not unlike a biological virus, where an idea can parasitically infect the mind and alter behavior, creating the urge to tell others about the idea, thus exposing them to the idea-virus.<sup>73</sup> Or, memes may spread more deliberately and selection is more closely aligned with Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection with only the “best” memes surviving. Dawkins has identified three characteristics of a successful replicating meme:

- the more faithful the copy, the more will remain of the initial pattern after several rounds of copying (copying-fidelity);
- the faster the rate of copying, the more the replicator will spread (fecundity);and

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<sup>70</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Al-Qa’ida as a Memeplex: Exploring an Alternative Analytical Paradigm (U)” (SECRET//NOFORN) (Washington: November 2, 2007), 1.

<sup>71</sup> Dawkins, *Selfish Gene*, 206.

<sup>72</sup> Susan Blackmore, “About Memes,” <http://www.susanblackmore.co.uk/memetics/about%20memes.htm> (accessed November 20, 2007).

<sup>73</sup> Glenn Grant, “Memes: Introduction,” *Principia Cybernetica Web*, <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/MEMIN.html> (accessed November 11, 2007).

- the longer any instance of the replicating pattern survives, the more copies can be made of it (longevity).<sup>74</sup>

Advanced memetic theory explores how a person may pass the meme on as he or she perceives it, or engages in “meme engineering,” whereby the meme is intentionally devised through meme-splicing and memetic synthesis for the purpose of altering the behavior of others.<sup>75</sup> Some memes are so interconnected that they become a “memeplex,” that is, a set of related memes that are aggregated, copied, and disseminated as a distinct group, such as religious, cultural, or political doctrines and systems.<sup>76</sup>

Successful ideas thrive because they are good at replicating themselves in the minds of others and thus spreading through the population. Figure 8 illustrates the meme life cycle, which essentially consists of 1) assimilation of a meme by an individual, who becomes a host; 2) retention in that person’s memory; 3) expression by the individual in language, behavior or another form that can be perceived by another person; and 4) transmission of the meme from one to another. This life cycle can repeat itself, resulting in either the perpetuation of the memes, elimination of the memes through selection, or the change of the meme through variation (Figure 8).<sup>77</sup>

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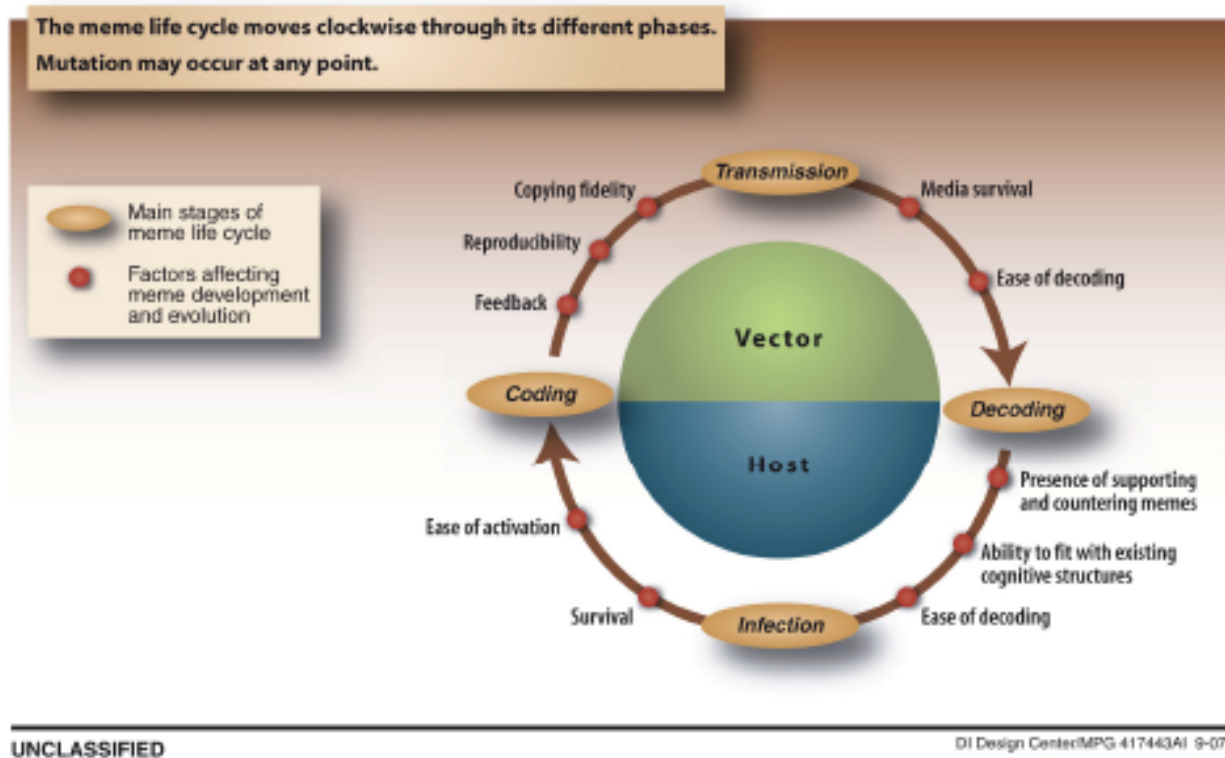
<sup>74</sup> “Memetics,” *Principia Cybernetica Web*, <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/MEMES.html> (accessed November 20, 2007).

<sup>75</sup> “Memetic Lexicon” *Principia Cybernetica Web*, <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/MELEX.html> (accessed November 20, 2007).

<sup>76</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, “Al-Qa’ida as a Memeplex,” 3.

<sup>77</sup> “Meme Replication: the Memetic Life Cycle,” *Principia Cybernetica Web*, <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/MEMEREP.html> (accessed November 20, 2007).

## The Meme Life Cycle (U)



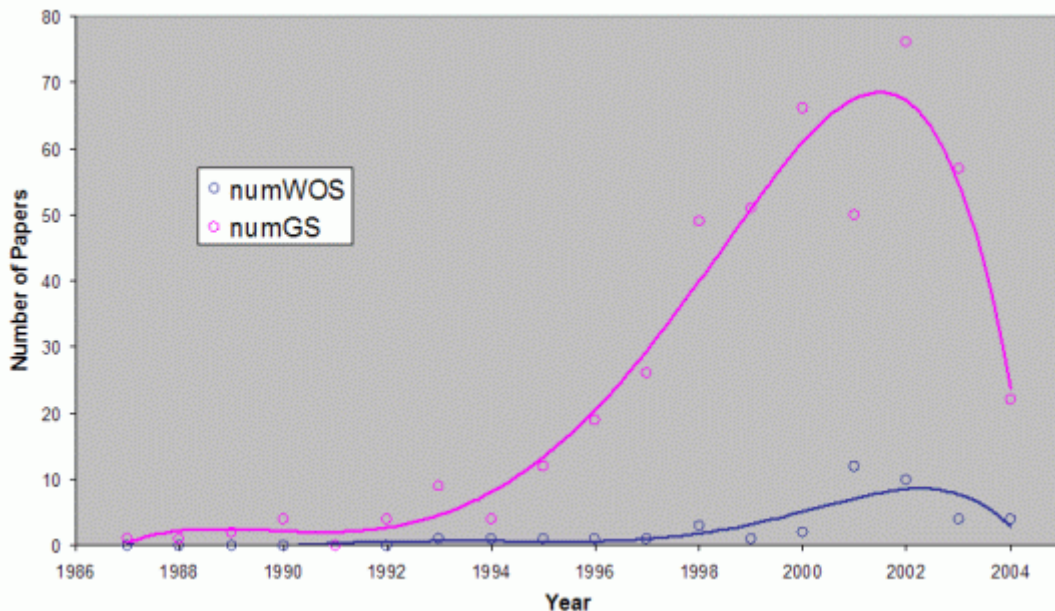
**Figure 8. The Meme Life Cycle (From 76.).**

It is important to understand that the defining characteristic of a meme is whether it is capable of reproducing itself and not whether the idea it represents is true or characterized accurately.<sup>78</sup> Because people are constantly trying to infect each other with the memes they find most appealing, regardless of whether the meme has value or is true, memetics theorists seek to understand (a) how memes that are seen as “weeds” contribute to the general survival of a memeplex; and (b) how the harmful effects of overgrowth of such memes can be controlled.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Steven Johnson, *Everything Bad is Good for You: How Today's Popular Culture is Actually Making Us Smarter* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2005), 205.

<sup>79</sup> David Dirlam, “Competing Meme Analysis,” *Journal of Memetics-Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission* 7, (2003), [http://cfpm.org/jom-emit/2003/vol7/dirlam\\_dk.html](http://cfpm.org/jom-emit/2003/vol7/dirlam_dk.html) (accessed November 27, 2007).

Memetics is not yet widely accepted in the scientific community. Relatively new as a theory and methodology, there is also debate within the memetics community about memes themselves. Should memes be thought of as gene-like or virus-like? Both points of view have made useful contributions to understanding human evolution.<sup>80</sup> In 2005, with the disbanding of the peer-reviewed *Journal of Memetics* due to a lack of quality submissions, Bruce Edmonds described in its final issue how memetics was “a short lived fad whose effect has been to obscure more than it has been to enlighten. I am afraid that memetics, as an identifiable discipline, will not be widely missed.”<sup>81</sup> To illustrate this as a fad, Edmonds modeled an estimation of the number of papers found in ISI’s citation index and Google Scholar that mention “memetic” and its variations (Figure 9).



**Figure 9.** Number of papers mentioning "memetic" each year between 1997-2004 according to Google Scholar (numGS, pink circles) and on the ISI's citation index (numWOS, blue circles). Lines are 6<sup>th</sup> degree fitted polynomial trend lines of the respective series (From 81.).

<sup>80</sup> Marion Blute, “Memetics and Evolutionary Social Science,” *Journal of Memetics-Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission* 9 (2005), [http://cfpm.org/jom-emit/2005/vol9/blute\\_m.html](http://cfpm.org/jom-emit/2005/vol9/blute_m.html) (accessed November 20, 2007).

<sup>81</sup> Bruce Edmonds, “The Revealed Poverty of the Gene-Meme Analogy—Why Memetics per se has Failed to Produce Substantive Results,” *Journal of Memetics-Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission* 9 (2005), [http://cfpm.org/jom-emit/2005/vol9/edmonds\\_b.html](http://cfpm.org/jom-emit/2005/vol9/edmonds_b.html) (accessed November 20, 2007).

Contrary to Edmonds' research, the number of references to "memetics" on Google Scholar appears to be increasing, not decreasing. On November 20, 2007, a search run on Google Scholar resulted in 288 references in articles published in 2002, 394 references in 2004, and 486 references in 2006.<sup>82</sup> These cursory results indicate that there may be growing, not lessening, acceptance and application of memetics. Also important to note in addition to the number of references to memetics is who is using memetics. During the past year, the U.S. government has taken an interest in the field, with a military memetics workshop held in April 2006 at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and the recent publication in November 2007 of a Central Intelligence Agency analytical product that uses memetics as an alternative analytic paradigm to understand Al-Qa'ida.<sup>83</sup> Finally, the Internet is an exceptional medium for the efficient spreading of memes. As its use continues to grow, memetics may prove useful as a theory for understanding how ideas spread and influence behavior.

#### **E. ZEITGEIST THEORY**

The word *Zeitgeist* is a combination of the German words for "time" and "spirit" and taken together, convey the concept of a "spirit of the times." It was created in 1769 by philologist Johann Gottfried Herder as a German translation of the title of Christian Adolph Klotz' work, *Genius seculi* (Latin: *genius* - "guardian spirit" and *saeculi* - "of the century").<sup>84</sup> The concept of a *Zeitgeist* gained favor with the great German thinker Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), and later the German Romantic philosophers Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) and George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). The word formally crossed over into the English language when Scottish essayist Thomas Carlyle translated the works of Goethe into English in the early 1820s and went on to include it in two of his own writings, "Characteristics" (1831) and in *Sartor Resartus*

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<sup>82</sup> One possible explanation for these differences may be the improved search capabilities and expanded number of sources available to Google Scholar.

<sup>83</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Al-Qa'ida as a Memeplex."

<sup>84</sup> Hermann Joseph Hiery, "Zur Einleitung: Der Historiker und Der Zeitgeist," Universität Bayreuth, <http://www.neueste.uni-bayreuth.de/ZeitgeistEinleitung.htm> (accessed January 21, 2008).

(1833-34).<sup>85</sup> However, it was not until the popular British poet and cultural critic Matthew Arnold used the term *Zeit-Geist*, that Zeitgeist gained broad public exposure. Arnold referred to the Zeitgeist often in his writings and the concept was repeated again by critics who reviewed his popular book, *Literature and Dogma* (1873), and other works.<sup>86</sup> Soon the word Zeitgeist was included in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) with the following definition: “the spirit or genius which marks the thought or feeling of a period or age.”<sup>87</sup> Use of the word Zeitgeist has continued throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries with only slight variations in its generally-accepted definition. For example, a 1984 edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines Zeitgeist as “the general intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of an era,”<sup>88</sup> while the contemporary online dictionary of publicly contributed knowledge, *Wikipedia*, explains that it is “originally a German expression that means ‘the spirit (*Geist*) of the time (*Zeit*)’ [that] denotes the intellectual and cultural climate of an era.”<sup>89</sup>

While the definition of Zeitgeist has generally remained the same since 1769, there have been two distinct ways of understanding how the *Zeitgeist* operates. Does the Zeitgeist constitute a reflection of the general movement of men’s ideas, or is the Zeitgeist a more causative power and the resulting movement its manifestation?<sup>90</sup> This philosophical conundrum is similar to the riddle, “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?” To the German Romantic philosophers such as Hegel, the Geist is a spirit that permeates the intellectual and cultural aspects of experience and defines that which makes us human. This spirit is not connected to a deity but does have a force of its own which is unique for particular periods of time. Thus, each historical period of time (the *Zeit*) has its own spirit (*Zeitgeist*) which accounts for the way in which historical times

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<sup>85</sup> Fraser Neiman, “The Zeitgeist of Matthew Arnold” *PMLA* 72, no. 5 (Dec. 1957): 980.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, <http://www.oed.com> (accessed June 12, 2007).

<sup>88</sup> *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 1984), 1370.

<sup>89</sup> Wikipedia.org, “Zeitgeist,” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeitgeist> (accessed March 9, 2007).

<sup>90</sup> Neiman, “Zeitgeist of Matthew Arnold,” 990.



determined human behavior.<sup>91</sup> For the German philosophers, the answer to the riddle is that the chicken comes first, as the force that creates the egg, with the egg being a manifestation of the chicken.

Ruminations about the Zeitgeist are not the sole purview of philosophers. Traditional “hard” science has also turned to the Zeitgeist as it has developed a “science of science.”<sup>92</sup> For example, when two or more scientists contribute the same new finding, method, theory, or application independently of each other, the Zeitgeist theory of creativity is the traditional explanation for these simultaneous discoveries.<sup>93</sup> One of the best-known examples of a multiple discovery is the independent development of calculus by both Isaac Newton and Gottfried Leibniz. The scientific application of the concept of a Zeitgeist was first championed by Edwin Boring in 1963 as the primary determinant of developments in science.<sup>94</sup> Boring asserted that the Zeitgeist of science is “its prevailing theories, facts, problems, and methods, as well as the values, opinions, and attitudes of its practitioners and the societal context in which it functions.”<sup>95</sup> Boring goes on to adopt a Hegelian approach to the Zeitgeist by asserting that this scientific Zeitgeist can both advance and hinder the emergence of ideas and procedures. To illustrate: Mendel reported his theory of the elements of heredity in 1866 but the study was ignored until 1900 when three other scientists made similar independent reports. It was not until 1900 that the scientific community was ready to acknowledge and advance Mendel’s theory. This example shows that from the scientific view of the Zeitgeist, “the individual creator is largely irrelevant to the cultural progress represented by the inevitable accumulation of scientific knowledge and technological expertise.”<sup>96</sup> Thus it does not

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<sup>91</sup> Herbert Kohl, *From Archetype to Zeitgeist* (New York: Little Brown & Co, 1992), 162.

<sup>92</sup> Werner Stark, “Book Review: History, Psychology, and Science: Selected Papers by Edwin G. Boring,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 70, no. 4 (1965): 518.

<sup>93</sup> Dean Keith Simonton, “Multiple Discovery and Invention: Zeitgeist, Genius, or Chance?” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 37, no. 9 (1979): 1603.

<sup>94</sup> Edwin G. Boring, *History, Psychology, and Science: Selected Papers* (New York: Wiley, 1963), 87-91.

<sup>95</sup> Darryl Bruce and Eugene Winograd, “Remembering Deese’s 1959 Articles: The Zeitgeist, the Sociology of Science, and False Memories” *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 5, no. 4 (1998): 615.

<sup>96</sup> Simonton, “Multiple Discovery and Invention,” 1603.

matter whether Newton or Leibniz developed calculus because someone else inevitably would have. When the time is right within the *Zeitgeist*, the discoveries will happen. The scientific *Zeitgeist* represents a hybrid approach to a spirit that is both a reflection of the times and also an enabler that causes the reflection to manifest itself.

In January 2001, the Internet search engine company Google launched a new program it called *Google Zeitgeist*. Anyone could log onto the website and gain insight into what people are searching for on the Internet during the previous week, month, or year. Trends in a wide variety of search areas are presented in the form of lists, graphs, pie charts, and even a timeline that correlates a certain event with a spike in queries. Referring to the Merriam-Webster definition of *Zeitgeist*, Google explained that it chose the word *Zeitgeist* and this definition to describe its program because through its analysis of over 150 million queries per day, it purported to offer a glimpse of what the world is looking at and thinking about.<sup>97</sup> Each year the billions of searches are aggregated and selective events presented for consideration as indicative of what has made the previous year memorable. Unlike the Hegelian *Zeitgeist*, *Google Zeitgeist* does not attempt to proffer a definitive answer on what events will have lasting effects. Instead, Google focused on providing information consistent with what has become the popularly held understanding of the *Zeitgeist*: a manifestation of the worldview prevalent at a very narrow period of socio-cultural development.<sup>98</sup>

Through this overview of *Zeitgeist* theory, the reader can observe the continuing appeal of this eighteenth/early nineteenth century German Romantic philosophy as a way to understand the surrounding world. While the word “*Zeitgeist*” has been used repeatedly throughout American culture since its introduction into English lexicon in the early nineteenth century, it appears to be growing in popularity during the past decade. It is not surprising therefore to read the posting of a weblogger who observed that it must be more than a coincidence that she has seen the word *Zeitgeist* on three different websites

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<sup>97</sup> Google.com, “Press Center” <http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist2002.html> ; <http://www.google.com/press/zeitgeist2001.html> (accessed June 14, 2007).

<sup>98</sup> Wikipedia.org, “*Zeitgeist*,” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zeitgeist> (accessed March 9, 2007). For reasons not disclosed, Google replaced *Google Zeitgeist* on May 22, 2007, with a new program called *Google Hot Trends*. *Hot Trends* shows a running list of the top search queries for the day.

in the previous twenty-four hours.<sup>99</sup> Beyond the launch of *Google Zeitgeist*, the word Zeitgeist manifests itself in all corners of popular culture: as the name of a coffee shop in downtown Seattle; on weblogs that seek to understand contemporary events (e.g., “iTunes and Zeitgeist” or “In Search of a Blair Zeitgeist”); or even as the title of a recent CD release by the alternative rock group, *Smashing Pumpkins*.<sup>100</sup> What these contemporary manifestations all have in common is the perception that the Zeitgeist captures a certain worldview present at a particular period of socio-cultural progression. It is this contemporary understanding of Zeitgeist theory that will be used to throughout this thesis.

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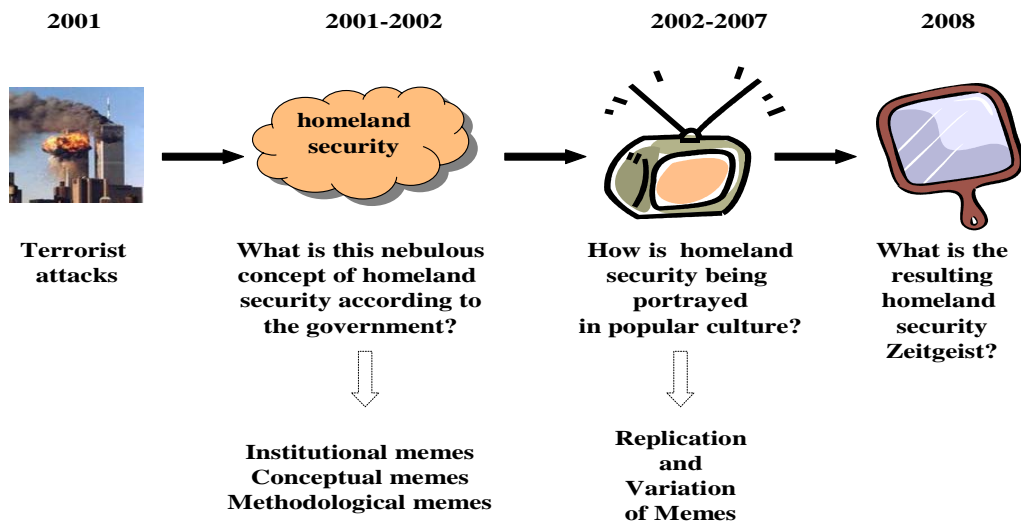
<sup>99</sup> E.K. Glendower, “Zeitgeist, the New “Old” Word,” A Room of One’s Own weblog, June 8, 2007, <http://egarooo.blogspot.com/2007/06/zeitgeist-new-old-word.html> (accessed June 9, 2007).

<sup>100</sup> Nav (Online moniker), “iTunes and Zeitgeist,” *Scrawled In Wax* weblog, June 6, 2007, <http://scrawledinwax.com/2007/06/itunes-and-zeitgeist.html> (accessed June 8, 2007); Caroline Michel, “In Search of a Blair Zeitgeist,” *Guardian Unlimited*, May 8, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/story/0,,2074305,00.html> (accessed May 11, 2007); “First Impressions: Smashing Pumpkins Zeitgeist,” *Filter Magazine*, April 23, 2007, [http://blog.filter-mag.com/filter/2007/04/first\\_impressio.html](http://blog.filter-mag.com/filter/2007/04/first_impressio.html) (accessed June 13, 2007).

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## IV. METHODOLOGY

This thesis follows a qualitative approach using a four-part methodology (Figure 10). First, original memes related to homeland security are identified based on the actions, words and images used by the federal government following 9/11. Second, American culture is examined to see how these memes have been expressed by individuals in language, behavior, or another form that can be perceived by another person, resulting either in the perpetuation of the meme, elimination of the meme, or changing of the meme through variation. Since the breadth of sources that contributes either individually or collectively to developing and defining American popular culture is staggering, representative samples of culture are examined for manifestation of homeland security memes. The focus was on popular culture, with emphasis on the word popular. Primary sources were selected from the best selling fiction and non-fiction on Amazon.com, the top search results retrieved from Google searches of weblogs, images, and songs, and television shows with notable Nielson ratings. Finally, these homeland security memes are assessed to see how they collectively constitute a homeland security Zeitgeist.



**Figure 10. Overview of thesis methodology.**

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## **V. INTRODUCING HOMELAND SECURITY AND ORIGINAL HOMELAND SECURITY MEMES**

### **A. THE FOUNDATIONS OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

It was approximately 8:50 AM EST on September 11, 2001, when producers began to whisper into news anchors' earpieces about a plane crashing into one of the World Trade Center towers in New York City. Much of the first ten minutes of live television discussion consisted of speculation about whether it was an accident or not, the size of the plane, and the impact on locals in New York City. The situation became more intense at 9:02 AM EST as many viewers watched live video feed of the smoking tower and a white plane moving across the screen followed by a giant explosion in the second tower (Figure 11). As the video feed was replayed again and again, viewers and the media began to realize this was more than an accident, with the magnitude of the impact and certain instantaneous loss of life shocking in its scale.<sup>101</sup>



**Figure 11.** Screen shot of explosion from United Flight 175 crashing into the south tower of the World Trade Center (From 101.).

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<sup>101</sup> Cameraman unknown, "CNN Breaking News," *September 11 News.com*, <http://www.september11news.com/TVScreenCNNBrekingNews.jpg> (accessed February 2, 2008).

The spectacular images of the planes crashing into the World Trade Center towers and their subsequent collapse was the type of dramatic image viewers had become used to seeing on television shows or a movie screen, not in real life. As one of the first individuals to come into the studio covered in the dust of the rubble described the collapse of the towers: “Honestly, it was like a scene from Independence Day—everything began to rain down; it was pitch black as if winds were whipping through Manhattan.”<sup>102</sup>

After almost two hours of live television coverage of the events in New York City, Washington, D.C., and the rest of the country, NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw attempted to frame the story for the viewers:

The magnitude of this will go on for some time. This is not just a national tragedy but this is a national security event of an untold magnitude that this country is going to have to deal with. The President is coming back and we are at war in effect here. This country has suffered a devastating attack that will cost us in the sense of in loss of life, it will also cost us in terms of our psychological security that we have in this country. We’re going to have to revisit a lot of our freedoms as a result of this kind of attack and then of course there is the whole question of retaliation. This place remains an enormous target in the eyes of a lot of people and we are so vulnerable because of those things that make us so great--our freedoms and our sense of security that we have. But America has been changed today by all of this.<sup>103</sup>

Among those changes was the feeling of vulnerability that Tom Brokaw referenced and the public expectation that the federal government would respond to this vulnerability as a national security matter. The government’s solution was “homeland security.”

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<sup>102</sup> Ron Ensan, interviewed by Matt Lauer and Katie Couric on September 11, 2001 and replayed in the show “9/11 as it Happened,” September 11, 2007, MSNBC.

<sup>103</sup> Tom Brokaw on September 11, 2001 and replayed in the show “9/11 as it Happened,” September 11, 2007, MSNBC.



Most Americans were first introduced to the term “homeland security” during President George W. Bush’s address to a special joint session of the Congress on September 20, 2001 (Figure 12).<sup>104</sup> In this speech, President Bush stated that since the attacks of 9/11:

Our nation has been put on notice: We are not immune from attacks. We will take defensive measures against terrorism to protect Americans. Today, dozens of federal departments and agencies, as well as state and local governments, have responsibilities affecting homeland security. These efforts must be coordinated at the highest level. So tonight I announce the creation of a Cabinet-level position reporting directly to me—the Office of Homeland Security.<sup>105</sup>



**Figure 12. President Bush addresses the nation during a joint session of Congress on Sept. 20, 2001 (From 104.).**

This speech was followed several days later by Executive Order 13228, which established the Office of Homeland Security within the Executive Office of the President. While homeland security was not defined in the Executive Order, the following key

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<sup>104</sup> “Rhetoric of 9-11: George W. Bush Address to a Joint Session of Congress Following 9/11 Attacks,” American Rhetoric.com, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/gwbush911jointsessionspeech.htm> (accessed February 2, 2008).

<sup>105</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, “Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People.”

homeland security functions were established and assigned to the new Office: “to detect, prepare for, prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks within the United States.”<sup>106</sup>

This executive order was quickly followed by a flurry of government activity by both the White House and the Congress. An article published in *CQ Weekly* summed up the mood of many government officials in Washington, DC at this time: “The horror of the terrorist attacks has left official Washington desperate to respond. As a result, Congress is preparing to debate new anti-terrorism legislation, proposed by [Attorney General] Ashcroft, with provisions that just weeks ago would never have been seriously considered.”<sup>107</sup> The sense of urgency to do something was heightened when an aide to Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) opened a letter on October 14, 2001, filled with millions of anthrax spores. Within two months, anthrax attacks across the country killed five people, including two postal workers; sickened eighteen others; forced the temporary closure of Congressional, Supreme Court, and NBC network’s New York third floor office buildings; resulted in the U.S. Postal Service closing twenty-three facilities for cleaning; and caused more than 30,000 people who might have been exposed to take powerful antibiotics at the urging of public health officials.<sup>108</sup>

By the end of October 2001, the Congress quickly passed the “Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism”<sup>109</sup> and the president issued the first in a series of Homeland Security Presidential Directives (HSPDs) intended to “record and communicate presidential decisions about the homeland security policies of the United States.”<sup>110</sup> This directive

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<sup>106</sup> *Executive Order 13228: Establishing the Office of Homeland Security* (Washington D.C.: The White House, October 8, 2001), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011008-2.html> (accessed March 14, 2007).

<sup>107</sup> Adriel Bettelheim and Elizabeth A. Palmer, “Balancing Liberty and Security,” *CQ Weekly*, September 22, 2001, 2120.

<sup>108</sup> Bruce Maxwell, “Bioterrorism Strikes the United States,” *Homeland Security: A Documentary History*, (Washington: CQ Press, 2004), 320.

<sup>109</sup> *Uniting and Strengthening America By Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA Patriot) Act of 2001*, Pub. Law 107-56, 115 St. 272.

<sup>110</sup> *Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-1* (Washington D.C.: The White House, October 30, 2001).

made it clear that securing Americans from terrorist attacks was now considered a critical national security function, requiring extensive coordination between federal, state, and local agencies.<sup>111</sup> That same day the president issued another Homeland Security Policy Directive that proclaimed that America's first step in combating terrorism was through the use of immigration policies.<sup>112</sup>

Another early homeland security step taken by the federal government was to introduce the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS). The White House established the HSAS on March 12, 2002 as a "comprehensive and effective means to disseminate information regarding the risk of terrorist acts to Federal, State, and local authorities and to the American people."<sup>113</sup> The HSAS is a color-coded chart, represented in Figure 13 below, with the color-coded levels indicating to the public the level of threat to homeland security. Through a set of graduated "Threat Conditions" the public is informed of an increased risk of the threat and federal departments and agencies implement a corresponding set of "Protective Measures" to either reduce vulnerability or increase response capability.<sup>114</sup> It was the White House's intention to use this system as a means of creating "a common vocabulary, context, and structure for an ongoing national discussion about the nature of the threats that confront the homeland and the appropriate measures that should be taken in response. It seeks to inform and facilitate decisions appropriate to different levels of government and to private citizens at home and at work."<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> *Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-1* (Washington D.C.: The White House, October 30, 2001).

<sup>112</sup> *Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-2* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, October 30, 2001).

<sup>113</sup> *Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-3* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, March 12, 2002). The Homeland Security Advisory System was codified into law November 2002, when the Congress passed the Homeland Security Act of 2002. *See* Section 201(d) (7) of the original Act.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*



**Figure 13. The visual representation of the Homeland Security Advisory System (From 113.).**

The Homeland Security Advisory System represents the first time the federal government has used a tiered advisory system to share threat information with the public.

Another first for the federal government was undertaking the largest government organizational restructuring in fifty years with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (hereinafter DHS or the Department).<sup>116</sup> During the ceremony to sign the Homeland Security Act of 2002 into law, President Bush offered the following promise:

We're fighting a new kind of war against determined enemies. And public servants long into the future will bear the responsibility to defend Americans against terror. This administration and this Congress have the duty of putting that system in place. We will fulfill that duty. With the Homeland Security Act, we're doing everything we can to protect

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<sup>116</sup> Homeland Security Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-296 (Nov. 25, 2002).

America. We're showing the resolve of this great Nation to defend our freedom, our security, and our way of life. It's now my privilege to sign the Homeland Security Act of 2002.<sup>117</sup>

Under the Act, the Congress gave the Department seven general missions:

1. Prevent terrorist attacks within the United States;
2. Reduce the vulnerability of the United States to terrorism;
3. Minimize the damage, and assist in the recovery, from terrorist attacks that do occur within the United States;
4. Carry out all functions of entities transferred to the Department, including by acting as a focal point regarding natural and manmade crises and emergency planning;
5. Ensure that the functions of the agencies and subdivisions within the Department that are not related directly to securing the homeland are not diminished or neglected except by a specific explicit Act of Congress;
6. Ensure that the overall economic security of the United States is not diminished by efforts, activities, and programs aimed at securing the homeland; and
7. Monitor connections between illegal drug trafficking and terrorism, coordinate efforts to sever such connections, and otherwise contribute to the efforts to interdict illegal drug trafficking.<sup>118</sup>

An eighth responsibility was added in December 2004 when the Homeland Security Act was amended by the "Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act":

8. Ensure that the civil rights and civil liberties of persons are not diminished by efforts, activities, and programs aimed at securing the homeland.<sup>119</sup>

While terrorism prevention is a core function of the Department, it is also responsible for carrying out the functions of entities transferred to the Department and ensuring that the functions of the agencies and subdivisions within the Department that are not related directly to securing the homeland are not diminished or neglected. These entities include

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<sup>117</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, "President Bush Remarks on Signing the Homeland Security Act of 2002" (Washington D.C.: The White House, November 25, 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/11/20021125-6.html>) (accessed January 26, 2008).

<sup>118</sup> Homeland Security Act, Sec.101(a).

<sup>119</sup> Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, Pub. L. 108-458, Section 8302 (December 17, 2004).

the United States Secret Service, the Federal Air Marshals, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, United States Coast Guard, and the Federal Protective Service, to name a few.

Through subsequent Homeland Security Presidential Directives, DHS was given a wide range of homeland security related responsibilities. For example, under HSPD-5, the president designated the Secretary of Homeland Security as the principal federal official for domestic incident management.<sup>120</sup> Under HSPD-7, the Secretary of Homeland Security must establish appropriate systems, mechanisms, and procedures to share homeland security information relevant to threats and vulnerabilities in national critical infrastructure and key resources with other federal departments and agencies, state and local governments, and the private sector in a timely manner.<sup>121</sup> And under HSPD 8, the president designated the secretary to serve as “the principal Federal official for coordinating the implementation of all-hazards preparedness in the United States.”<sup>122</sup> Preparedness is defined in HSPD-8 as “the existence of plans, procedures, policies, training, and equipment necessary at the Federal, State, and local level to maximize the ability to prevent, respond to, and recover from major events.”

To implement these executive orders, directives, and Congressional legislation, billions of dollars have been spent each year since 2001. Figure 14 summarizes the funding estimates prepared by the Congressional Budget Office for 2001-2006.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> *Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-5* (Washington D.C.: The White House, February 28, 2003).

<sup>121</sup> *Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-7* (Washington D.C.: The White House, December 17, 2003).

<sup>122</sup> *Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-8* (Washington D.C.: The White House, December 17, 2003).

<sup>123</sup> Congressional Budget Office, “Economic and Budget Issue Brief,” July 20, 2005.

## Total Federal Resources Allocated for Homeland Security, 2001 to 2006

(Budget authority in billions of dollars)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	Estimated 2005 <sup>a</sup>	Requested 2006 <sup>a</sup>
Discretionary Budget Authority						
Regular appropriations	15.0	17.1	32.2	36.5	43.0	42.2
Supplemental appropriations	3.6	12.3	5.9	0.1	0.6	0
Fee-funded activities	0.7	2.0	2.6	3.2	3.3	5.4
Mandatory Spending	<u>1.5</u>	<u>1.7</u>	<u>1.8</u>	<u>1.9</u>	<u>2.2</u>	<u>2.2</u>
<b>Gross Budget Authority<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>42.5</b>	<b>41.7</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>49.7</b>

Sources: Congressional Budget Office; Office of Management and Budget.

Note: Components may not sum to totals because of rounding. All years referred to are fiscal years.

- a. The figures in this brief differ slightly from those published by the Office of Management and Budget as part of the Administration's 2006 budget request because CBO used different estimates of spending for mandatory and fee-funded activities.
- b. Excludes offsetting collections and receipts, which are recorded as negative budget authority. (For 2004, those totaled \$5.0 billion. For 2005, according to CBO's estimates, they will total \$5.3 billion.)

**Figure 14. Total federal resources allocated for homeland security, 2001-2006 (From 123.).**

The Congress appropriated \$40.3 billion for 2006, \$42.8 billion for 2007, and \$43.2 billion for 2008.<sup>124</sup> These funds are used for federal operations as well as channeled to state and local agencies through grant programs and emergency assistance.

In addition to new programs and spending, government officials spoke out often about the topic of securing America. Early messages to the public from the Bush Administration framed the threat to homeland security as a “good versus evil” binary, with the American people as “the best in the world”<sup>125</sup> fighting an “enemy that hides in the shadows.”<sup>126</sup> Attorney General John Ashcroft expanded upon this theme in his prepared testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee on December 6, 2001:

<sup>124</sup> Department of Homeland Security, “DHS Budget in Brief Fiscal Year 2008,” [http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/budget\\_bib-fy2008.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/budget_bib-fy2008.pdf) (accessed January 22, 2008); Office of Management and Budget, “Budget of the United States, FY2008: Homeland Security,” <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2008/homeland.html> (accessed January 22, 2008).

<sup>125</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, “President Remarks Upon Landing” (Washington D.C.: The White House, September 16, 2001), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010916-2.html> (accessed December 19, 2007).

<sup>126</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, “Remarks by President Bush at Photo Op” (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 12, 2001), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010912-4.html> (accessed December 19, 2007).

My day begins with a review of the threats to Americans and American interests that were received in the previous 24 hours. If ever there were proof of the existence of evil in the world, it is in the pages of these reports. They are a chilling daily chronicle of hatred of America by fanatics who seek to extinguish freedom, enslave women, corrupt education and to kill Americans wherever and whenever they can. The terrorist enemy that threatens civilization today is unlike any we have ever known. It slaughters thousands of innocents—a crime of war and a crime against humanity. It seeks weapons of mass destruction and threatens their use against America. No one should doubt the intent, nor the depth, of its consuming, destructive hatred. Terrorists operatives infiltrate our communities—plotting, planning and waiting to kill again. They enjoy the benefits of our free society even as they commit themselves to our destruction. They exploit our openness—not randomly or haphazardly—but by deliberate, premeditated design.<sup>127</sup>

America's plan of attack on this new enemy was to initiate a "war against terror," both domestically and internationally.<sup>128</sup> As the righteous warrior, America would "meet violence with patient justice -- assured of the rightness of our cause and confident of the victories to come."<sup>129</sup> So certain of the rightness of the American cause, President Bush declared that all nations had a decision they must make: "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."<sup>130</sup>

American citizens had a decision to make as well. In his remarks to airline employees at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and later to citizens of Atlanta, President Bush called upon the public to not give in to an atmosphere of fear. By going forward with routine activities such as "playing, worshipping at churches and synagogues, and mosques, going to movies and to baseball games," Americans will be doing their part to "not give the power of fear to the terrorists."<sup>131</sup> Getting back to a state

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<sup>127</sup> John Ashcroft, U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. "Department of Justice Oversight: Preserving our Freedoms While Defending Against Terrorism," Prepared Testimony of Attorney General John Ashcroft. 107<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess. S. Hrg. 107-704, serial J-107-50, December 6, 2001. <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS25921> (accessed Jan 22, 2008).

<sup>128</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People."

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> George W. Bush quoted in "Transcript of Bush Speech in Atlanta," CNN.com, November 8, 2001, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/11/08/rec.bush.transcript/> (accessed January 26, 2008).



of normalcy included overcoming any residual fear of flying. Americans were encouraged to “Get on board. Do your business around the country. Fly and enjoy America's great destination spots. Get down to Disney World in Florida. Take your families and enjoy life, the way we want it to be enjoyed.”<sup>132</sup> While Americans were not expected to ignore the threat, they were encouraged to go about their daily lives despite the threat.

## **B. THE ORIGINAL HOMELAND SECURITY MEMES**

As mentioned earlier, most Americans were introduced to the term “homeland security” during President Bush’s address to the Joint Session of Congress and the nation on September 20, 2001. That speech also marks the introduction of homeland security into American popular culture as a meme. Since then the “homeland security” meme has been copied and disseminated a thousand times over by government officials in speeches to the public, testimony to the Congress, and government reports, regulations, and policy documents. Despite this frequent usage, an official definition of “homeland security” did not appear until nearly ten months after 9/11 with the publication of the *National Strategy for Homeland Security*. Homeland security is defined as “a concerted national effort to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce America’s vulnerability to terrorism, and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur.”<sup>133</sup> However, whether due to the delay in publication or the vagueness of the definition itself, patterns had already emerged related to homeland security that persist even today.

The term homeland security has evolved into three distinct meanings: as an institution, a concept, and a methodology.<sup>134</sup> In its institutional context, homeland security generally refers to a federal or state government organization with homeland

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<sup>132</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, “At O’Hare, Bush Says “Get on Board” (Washington D.C.: The White House, September 27, 2001), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010927-1.html> (accessed January 26, 2008).

<sup>133</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, *National Strategy for Homeland Security* (Washington D.C.: The White House, July 2002), <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS20641> (accessed January 28, 2007).

<sup>134</sup> This framework for understanding homeland security is based on an analysis of the term *transnational* offered by Winfried Fluck in his essay, “Inside and Outside: What Kind of Knowledge Do We Need? A Response to the Presidential Address,” *American Quarterly* 59 (March 2007): 23.

security responsibilities. Conceptually, homeland security is seen as a goal to be achieved, compared to the methodological approach which describes actions taken to achieve the goal. Therefore, while it is appropriate to consider “homeland security” as an individual meme, it is also appropriate to consider homeland security as a memeplex of related memes. The patterns of this memeplex provide a useful framework to understand how the homeland security memes have been introduced into American culture following 9/11:

- through new homeland security institutional memes—such as the Office of Homeland Security and later, Department of Homeland Security;
- new homeland security conceptual memes—such as articulated in the mission of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, end-state goals included in federal airport security screening regulations, or the principles contained in the National Homeland Security Strategy; or
- new homeland security methodological memes—such as using the Homeland Security Advisory System to advise the public.

Table 1 further illustrates how the words and actions of government officials introduced homeland security memes. The next chapters of this thesis will examine how these and other homeland security memes have been transmitted in various ways, resulting either in the perpetuation of the meme, elimination of the meme, or changing of the meme through variation.

<b>Institutional Memes</b>	<b>Conceptual Memes</b>	<b>Methodological Memes</b>
“Homeland Security” representing the White House Office of Homeland Security	“good versus evil” binary	Using the Homeland Security Advisory System to inform the public about threats.
“Homeland Security” representing the Department of Homeland Security	“War Against Terror”	Planning for “homeland defense” by using the military to support civil authorities for homeland security.
“Homeland Security” representing a State Office of Homeland Security	America as the “righteous warrior”	“Information sharing” as a critical piece of “connecting the dots.”
“DHS” representing the Department of Homeland Security	We can prevent terrorism through better organization, communication, and spending more money.	Using immigration controls and enforcement to keep the homeland secure.
“Homeland Security” now including the US Coast Guard, US Secret Service, Immigration and Nationalization Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other well-established entities.	Congress and the White House designating 9/11 as “Patriot Day” and asking Americans to display the American flag as a symbol of American pride, unity and patriotism.	The “homeland security funding” process which gives money to state, local, and tribal governments through the Homeland Security Grant Program.
“Homeland Security Advisor” representing the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism	America as the victim of attacks because they hate our freedoms.	Counterterrorism training at all levels of government as a key part of prevention and response.
“Homeland Security Advisor” representing the Senior Advisor for a State governor on Homeland Security matters.	The public is encouraged to not give in to the fear and get back to a sense of normalcy.	“Be Ready” campaign for individual and corporate preparedness

**Table 1. Original homeland security memes introduced through government words and actions.**

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## VI. FINDINGS: HOMELAND SECURITY MEMES IN BOOKS

In support of this thesis, a search was conducted on Amazon.com on July 26, 2007 to identify books that mentioned the phrase “homeland security” at least once. This search resulted in 7,841 books, with all of the books published after September 11, 2001.<sup>135</sup> The breadth of categories and number of books within each that reference homeland security may be surprising (Table 2):

CATEGORY	RESULTS
Business & Investing	1,676
Calendars	9
Cooking, Food & Wine	12
Gay & Lesbian	28
Children’s Books	118
Home & Garden	67
Computers & Internet	586
Entertainment	282
Health, Mind & Body	403
History	1,564
Law	693
Medicine	374
Mystery & Thrillers	424
Nonfiction	4,337
Outdoors & Nature	227
Arts & Photography	464
Parenting & Families	84
Literature & Fiction	786
Professional & Technical	2,450
Reference	752
Romance	62
Science	1,247
Biographies & Memoirs	277
Religion & Spirituality	398
Science Fiction & Fantasy	101
Sports	65
Teens	116
Travel	208
Comics & Graphic Novels	25

**Table 2. Search results for the number of books by genre that reference “homeland security” found on Amazon.com on July 26, 2007.**

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<sup>135</sup> Some books were updated versions of earlier editions, such as George Orwell’s *1984* and travel guidebooks. The total number of results from the categorical breakdown of books is 18,556. The number is higher because many books are listed in more than one category by Amazon.com.

While references to homeland security in fictional thrillers, mysteries, and nonfiction history books may be expected, it may not seem as likely that there would be over three hundred medicine books or over one hundred children's books that would include the memes. Several of these books will be explored in more detail to demonstrate how the initial homeland security memes are expressed, as well as vary during the replication process.

#### **A. REPLICATING ORIGINAL MEMES**

As discussed earlier in the overview of memetics, there are three characteristics of successfully replicating memes: copy-fidelity, fecundity, and longevity. The existence of thousands of books published since September 11, 2001 that reference homeland security is strong evidence that there is both fecundity and longevity to the original homeland security memes. There also appears to be excellent copy-fidelity as well. The most significant example of this is found in Elizabeth Gilbert's bestselling book, *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search For Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia*, which includes the institution, concept and method homeland security memes. Not only was Gilbert's book the number one result in the July 26, 2007 search, it was also the overall bestselling book on Amazon.com and has been the number one nonfiction paperback on the *New York Times* bestseller's list since May 13, 2007. The book describes a woman in her thirties who spends four months each in Italy, India, and Indonesia as part of her journey to find herself after a painful divorce. During these journeys, she befriends a Christian man named Yudhi who was caught up in the post-9/11 government efforts to identify Islamic terrorists within the United States.

On September 11, Yudhi watched the towers fall from his rooftop in Brooklyn. Like everyone else he was paralyzed with grief at what had happened—how could somebody inflict such an appalling atrocity on the city that was the most full of love of anywhere in the world? I don't know how much attention Yudhi was paying when the U.S. Congress subsequently passed the Patriot Act in response to the terrorist threat—legislation which included draconian new immigration laws, many of which were directed against Islamic nations such as Indonesia. One of these provisions demanded that all Indonesian citizens living in America register with the Department of Homeland Security. The telephones

started ringing as Yudhi and his young Indonesian immigrant friends tried to figure out what to do—many of them had overstayed their visas and were afraid that registering would get them deported. On the other hand, they were afraid to not register, thereby behaving like criminals. Presumably the fundamentalist Islamic terrorists roaming around America ignored this registration law, but Yudhi decided that he did want to register. He was married to an American and he wanted to update his immigration status and become a legal citizen. He didn't want to live in hiding.

He and Ann [his new American wife] consulted all kinds of lawyers, but nobody knew how to advise them. Before 9/11 there would have been no problems—Yudhi, now married, could just go to the immigration office, update his visa situation and begin the process of gaining citizenship. But now? Who knew? “The laws haven't been tested yet” said the immigration lawyers. “The laws will be tested on you.” So Yudhi and his wife had a meeting with a nice immigration official and shared their story. The couple were told that Yudhi was to come back later that afternoon, for “a second interview.” They should have been wary then; Yudhi was strictly instructed to return without his wife, without a lawyer, and carrying nothing in his pockets. Hoping for the best, he did return alone and empty-handed to the second interview—and that's when they arrested him.<sup>136</sup>

In this passage, both the reference to the Department of Homeland Security and the requirement for Indonesian citizens in the United States to register with DHS are accurate replicas of the original institutional meme of the Department of Homeland Security and methodological meme of immigration controls. The variation comes in the way the author has used this story to question whether the immigration controls meme (deporting someone whom she does not think is a threat to homeland security) is an effective method for achieving another homeland security meme—preventing terrorist attacks.

Another bestselling novel that transmits homeland security memes is Richard Powers' *The Echo Maker*, winner of the 2006 National Book Award.<sup>137</sup> The protagonist of the novel is Mark Schluter, a thirty-something man who suffers from a rare case of Capgras syndrome after waking up from a fourteen-day coma induced by a terrible car

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<sup>136</sup> Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia* (New York: Penguin, 2007), 248-249.

<sup>137</sup> Richard Powers, *The Echo Maker* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006).

accident. Capgras syndrome is a condition where the patient is under the delusion that loved ones, such as a family member or close friend, are doubles or imposters. Mark spends a year in a maddening world where he believes that the government had something to do with his condition and sent someone to spy on him who looks like his sister. Hence the irony he perceives when he receives word that the National Guard is now in desperate need of his services and it was time for him to “do his bit for Homeland Security.”<sup>138</sup> The reference to using the National Guard to support homeland security is a faithful copy of the original homeland security method meme found in the National Homeland Security Strategy, which describes how the National Guard is used to support civil authorities for homeland security.<sup>139</sup>

In a young adult book, *Runner*, Chance Taylor lives with his father on a thirty-year-old sailboat docked at a marina in the Puget Sound of Washington. Beginning with the first page of the first chapter, the impact of 9/11 on the world of this high school student is identified prominently:

School is always different on September 11. This year, instead of going straight to class, we had an assembly first period. The choir sang patriotic songs, the principal gave a speech, and the marching band played The Star-Spangled Banner. In every class—even math class—teachers lead boring discussions. Kids around me took turns talking about terrorism, and Iraq, and Osama bin Laden, and al-Qaida. It seemed like everybody had an opinion about something.<sup>140</sup>

Except Chance, who usually sits quietly through his classes. Feeling like an outcast due to his extreme poverty, Chance is drawn out of his shell when befriended by Melissa, editor of the school newspaper. In the scene below, Chance meets with Melissa and two other students, Thomas and Natasha, who are on the newspaper staff, to brainstorm ideas for Chance to write about for his first article:

“He could write about the threat of terrorism,” Natasha said.

“What threat of terrorism?” Melissa asked.

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<sup>138</sup> Richard Powers, *The Echo Maker* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 333.

<sup>139</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, 44.

<sup>140</sup> Carl Deuker, *Runner* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Books, 2005), 3-4.



“My dad has a friend who works for the FBI. He says they are really worried about the ports. There are zillions of boats floating around on the Sound and nobody keeps track of them. Terrorists could sail in and blow up whatever they wanted.”

Melissa looked at me. “Is that true?”

“I wouldn’t say nobody keeps track,” I said. “There’s the Coast Guard and the port police, and there’s customs and there’s immigration. Homeland Security must be down there too, but I don’t think I’ve ever seen them.”

“But they don’t check all the boats, do they?” Natasha insisted.

“No,” I said. “How could they?”....

“It isn’t a bad idea, Chance. It really isn’t. You don’t have to find real terrorists or anything like that. All you have to do is write about how easy it would be for terrorists to get into the marina. It’s worth thinking about.”<sup>141</sup>

This passage is interesting not only because of the replication of the DHS institutional meme, but also because the replication may have been unintentional. Using the Coast Guard, Customs and Immigration personnel to secure ports is part of the National Strategy for Maritime Security.<sup>142</sup> However, the comment “Homeland Security must be down there too, but I don’t think I’ve ever seen them” indicates a lack of awareness that the Coast Guard, customs and immigration officers are no longer separate government agencies. After the Department of Homeland Security was created in 2002, these entities were transferred into the new Department. Therefore, their presence signifies that the Department of Homeland Security is present.

Many other books have also maintained excellent copy-fecundity of the original memes, usually in works of nonfiction. For example, in the book *Staying Safe: The Complete Guide to Protecting Yourself, Your Family, and Your Business*, readers are advised to be on alert for the latest government warnings and look for them at the Office

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<sup>141</sup> Deuker, *Runner*, 95.

<sup>142</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, *National Strategy for Maritime Security* (Washington D.C.: September 2005), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/maritime-security.html> (accessed January 25, 2008).

of Homeland Security website.<sup>143</sup> Travel guidebooks such as *Frommer's Maine Coast* mention the Department of Homeland Security in connection with immigration and customs procedures at the border for both U.S. and non U.S. citizens.<sup>144</sup> A bit more unusual but still consistent with the original memes is a test question in an SAT review book: "The Department of Homeland Security hopes to establish not only a useful terrorism-alert system, but they also want to keep potential terrorists from entering the United States..." followed by five options on how to improve the grammar and syntax of the sentence.<sup>145</sup> In this question, the reader can see an original homeland security institution meme (the Department of Homeland Security), homeland security concept meme ("keep potential terrorists from entering the United States") and homeland security methodological meme ("useful terror-alert system").

Several books now include the conceptual meme of homeland security as a part of everyday life in America. After internalizing President Bush's warning that "Our nation has been put on notice: We are not immune from attacks," homeland security appears to have been added by the popular self help book series "*for Dummies*" to the list of everyday stresses for Americans, along with work, family, children, and finances.<sup>146</sup> It is also on the mind of fictional characters as well, such as the recently-diagnosed protagonist in Elin Hilderbrand's novel, *Barefoot*, who adds homeland security to her mental checklist of things to worry about while driving to the clinic to begin chemotherapy: "Needlepoint Christmas stockings, flossing, the score of the Red Sox game, corn silk hair, clumps of it, clogging the bathtub drain, poison ivy, the weather, the outlandish price of gasoline, homeland security, money, erections, sex."<sup>147</sup> Such are the worries of the post 9/11 soccer moms of America.

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<sup>143</sup> Juval Aviv, *Staying Safe: The Complete Guide to Protecting Yourself, Your Family, and Your Business* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004), 17.

<sup>144</sup> Paul Karr, *Frommer's Main Coast (Frommer's Complete)* (Hoboken: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2007), 32.

<sup>145</sup> Peter Edwards, *Maximum SAT: Second Edition* (Booksurge Publishing, 2006), 13.

<sup>146</sup> Sue Fox, *Etiquette for Dummies* (Hoboken: Wiley Publishing, 2007), 23.

<sup>147</sup> Elin Hilderbrand, *Barefoot: A Novel* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2007), 148.

## B. VARIATIONS DURING REPLICATION

Variations have developed as the original memes have been replicated in books, consistent with Darwinian natural selection principles. The most common variation is the portrayal of the Department of Homeland Security as either the Orwellian 1984 “Big Brother” agency working to increase its surveillance of domestic activities or the completely controlling but incompetent bureaucracy like the one depicted in Terry Gilliam’s 1985 Academy Award-nominated movie “Brazil.” Consider these excerpts from several best-selling novels:

- *Bright Lights, Big Ass: A Self-Indulgent, Surly, Ex-Sorority Girl’s Guide to Why It Often Sucks in the City, or Who are These Idiots and Why Do They All Live Next Door to Me?:* I don’t know why he [her shifty neighbor] still likes us after I kind of accidentally reported him to Homeland Security....<sup>148</sup>
- *How to Be Invisible: The Essential Guide to Protecting Your Personal Privacy, your Assets, and Your Life:* A key is hidden outside in such a way that not even the Homeland Security boys will ever find it.<sup>149</sup>
- *Rainbows End:* “Just go up and knock down the [radar antenna] node.”

“Hmm.”

“Hey, don’t worry. Homeland Security won’t notice.”

In fact, the Department of Homeland Security would almost certainly notice, at least after the localizer mesh was patched. But just as certainly they wouldn’t care. DHS logic was deeply embedded in all hardware. “See All, Know All” was their motto, but what they knew and saw was for their own mission. They were notorious about not sharing with law enforcement.<sup>150</sup>

- *The Short Bus: A Journey Beyond Normal:* “Check it out,” he said, and so I walked over to the [row of pay] phones. On each handle was a sticker that Kent had bought off the Internet and that read, *This phone is tapped by the Department of Homeland Security*. I looked back at Kent; he was bent over with laughter. I

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<sup>148</sup> Jen Lancaster, *Bright Lights, Big Ass: A Self-Indulgent, Surly, Ex-Sorority Girl’s Guide to Why It Often Sucks in the City, or Who are These Idiots and Why Do They All Live Next Door to Me?* (New York: New American Library, 2007), 256.

<sup>149</sup> J.J. Luna, *How to Be Invisible: The Essential Guide to Protecting Your Personal Privacy, Your Assets, and Your Life* (Revised Edition) (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2004), 222.

<sup>150</sup> Vernor Vinge, *Rainbows End* (New York: Tor Books, 2006), 43.

gave him the thumbs-up, somewhat halfheartedly I have to admit. His prank was sophomoric, and not particularly funny, as is often the case with Kent. “We are all being watched,” Kent said. This made me think of something I had read. I told Kent that I believed there are two fundamental paradigms for controlling deviance in our culture. In the model of the leper, the deviant is exiled from the community. But the second, the truly defining model for our culture, is the model of the plague. In the plague model the sick are constantly being watched. “That is my story,” Kent said.<sup>151</sup>

- *Rightsizing Your Life: Simplifying Your Surroundings While Keeping What Matters Most*: Another choice is to leave nothing to chance and, assuming you are not trying to pass through a Homeland Security checkpoint, keep your mover’s tool kit with you at all times and don’t even put it on the truck.<sup>152</sup>
- *Predator*: The Citation X [jet] flies south at just under mach one as Lucy uploads files on a virtual private network that is so firewall-protected not even Homeland Security can break in.<sup>153</sup>
- *The Gluten-Free Bible*: In our post-9/11 world, worse things than gluten can befall an American abroad. The first stop in any travel itinerary should be the State Department Web site ([www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)), which offers travel advisories and warnings for Americans around the world. Another good site to cruise before travelling is the Orwellian-sounding Department of Homeland Security at [www.whitehouse.gov/homeland](http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland). This is sad, but it is a fact of life for the foreseeable future. We are told by the Transportation Security Administration ([www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)) to keep foods like chocolate, cheese, and fruitcake out of our checked luggage. This rule is not a plot against traveling celiacs, it is simply that the new detection systems cannot tell the difference in density between food and bombs or other explosives.<sup>154</sup>
- *Alchemy of Nine Dimensions*: Various people and forces drawn to manipulate you, to take your power away, or to harm you cannot affect you while you are in your center. For example, Homeland Security cannot reach into your heart, even if it imprisons our culture. If you *are* in prison reading this, create altars in your

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<sup>151</sup> Jonathan Mooney, *The Short Bus: A Journey Beyond Normal* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007), 81.

<sup>152</sup> Ciji Ware and Gail Sheehy, *Rightsizing your Life: Simplifying Your Surroundings While Keeping What Matters Most* (New York: Springboard Press, 2007), 206.

<sup>153</sup> Patricia Cornwell, *Predator* (New York: Berkeley Publishing Group, 2005), 70.

<sup>154</sup> Jax Peters Lowell, *The Gluten-Free Bible: The Thoroughly Indispensable Guide to Negotiating Life Without Wheat* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 201.

jail cell to access freedom. Once you are oriented this way in the world, invasive influences bounce off you like water. The Ps say we all will need these skills in the coming days.<sup>155</sup>

- *Schmucks!: Our Favorite Fakes, Frauds, Lowlifes, Liars, the Armed and the Dangerous, and Good Guys Gone Bad*: The truth is the new screening machines are basically tweezers detectors. Since 9/11, the Department of Homeland Security has uncovered close to three million tweezers, about 90 percent seized on the New York to Miami or Fort Lauderdale and return flights. Every one of these tweezers was attached to a key ring carried by an elderly Jewish person. What this means to us is that unless terrorist weapons are attached to key rings, these will never be discovered at the airport. It did not help that, when all these new security measures were put in place, President Bush encouraged the nation to be alert but not be nervous, to keep an eye out at all time for suspicious activity but to go about our business in a normal fashion. Nor were we buoyed by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's suggestion that Americans actively hunt down possible terrorists roaming free in the country. Did Rumsfeld anticipate that seniors in old-age homes were going to put in their dentures and hunt down the world's most dangerous terrorist and say, "The game is up, Osama buddy; you're coming with us"? All of these new security measures bring to mind a T-shirt we saw for sale on the street in Manhattan. It depicts five tough-looking Native Americans in full war dress standing under the slogan: *Homeland Security since 1492*.<sup>156</sup>

The final variations observed from this research are new homeland security-related memes that analogize homeland security functions as a way to understand human behavior. For instance, in the book *Evolve Your Brain: The Science of Changing Your Mind*, the author believes there is an intelligence force within our body that serves as "our own inner version of Homeland Security [that] knows how to fight off thousands of bacteria and viruses without our ever needing to realize that we are under attack. It even memorizes those invaders so that if they enter us again, the immune system is better prepared."<sup>157</sup> Another author characterizes the two almond-shaped structures located toward the base of the brain, the amygdalas, as responsible for serving as "the brain's Department of Homeland Security.... play[ing] a crucial role in processing emotions,

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<sup>155</sup> Barbara Hand Clow and Gerry Clow, *Alchemy of Nine Dimensions: Decoding the Vertical Axis, Crop Circles, and the Mayan Calendar* (Charlottesville: Hampton Roads Publishing Company, 2004), 37.

<sup>156</sup> Jackie Mason and Raoul Felder, *Schmucks!: Our Favorite Fakes, Frauds, Lowlifes, Liars, the Armed and the Dangerous, and Good Guys Gone Bad* (New York: Krapatakin, 2007), 186-87.

<sup>157</sup> Joe Dispenza, *Evolve Your Brain: The Science of Changing Your Mind* (Deerfield Beach: Health Communications, Inc., 2007), 41.

especially fear. With one located in the left hemisphere and the other in the right, the amygdalas are ever on the lookout for threats in our midsts.”<sup>158</sup> Other types of warning can be provided as well, such as the color of lipstick that high school senior Taylor Rockefeller’s neurotic mother chooses in the book *Acceptance*: “The application of Chanel Coco Red painted on her mother’s lips was jarringly bright, and Taylor had come to know this shade as the first warning sign that Nina was hovering near the edge, like the color-coded warning system devised by Homeland Security.”<sup>159</sup>

From dutifully replicating the idea that “homeland security protocols are in place” in a fictitious thriller, to analogizing the homeland security advisory system as a type of alert mechanism in self-help books (e.g., “Warning: When [financial] trusts are invaded—it might warrant a homeland security code green alert”), homeland security memes are abundant in the books within American popular culture.<sup>160</sup> Many of the books cited in this chapter were published in 2006 or 2007, indicating a good rate of longevity for the homeland security memes. Also significant is that the search query of Amazon.com that had over 7,000 book results in July 2007 had almost 10,000 books returns when repeated in January 2008—an amazing rate of fecundity for these memes.

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<sup>158</sup> Daniel Pink, *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future* (New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 2006), 23.

<sup>159</sup> Susan Coll, *Acceptance: A Novel* (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2007), 189.

<sup>160</sup> James Rollins, *Black Order* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2006), 423; Alan Feigenbaum and Heather Linton, *The Complete Guide to Protecting Your Financial Security When Getting a Divorce* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 203.

## VII. FINDINGS: HOMELAND SECURITY MEMES ON TELEVISION

The initial response by the television networks to the attacks on September 11, 2001 was unprecedented, with major U.S. broadcast networks remaining on air continuously without a single commercial for four days.<sup>161</sup> The networks also took immediate steps to review scripts or projects under development for references to bombing, hijacking, terrorism, or other sensitive subjects that producers thought might be unsettling to Americans at that time.<sup>162</sup> Within two weeks, the networks organized a celebrity telethon on September 21, 2001, *America: A Tribute to Heroes*, which was simulcast on more than 320 national broadcast and cable networks.<sup>163</sup> However, the altruistic and patriotic interests of Hollywood could not last for much longer because of a little hidden fact about the television business—it is all about the money.<sup>164</sup> Back in 2001, during a typical week, the networks generated about \$300 million in advertising revenue.<sup>165</sup> The Hollywood networks would soon go bankrupt if there was not a return to their normal—and prosperous—business of creating popular culture.<sup>166</sup>

But before things could get back to “normal,” Hollywood got its first real-life contact with the government’s homeland security officials the same day President Bush pleaded with Americans to get back to their normal lives. Studio executives were contacted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and warned that there was a possible terrorist plot against movie studios.<sup>167</sup> Meetings were cancelled, security

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<sup>161</sup> Paula Bernstein, “Blurb Biz Re-Evaluates Ad Climate in Wake of Attacks,” *Variety* (October 1-7, 2001): 384, 7.

<sup>162</sup> “Shell-Shocked Showbiz” and “On Split Screen” *Variety* (September 17-23, 2001): 384, 37.

<sup>163</sup> Lynn Spigel, “Entertainment Wars: Television Culture after 9/11” *American Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (June 2004): 250.

<sup>164</sup> Richard Levinson and William Link, *Off Camera: Conversations with the Makers of Prime-Time Television* (New York: Plume, 1986), 12.

<sup>165</sup> Paula Bernstein, “Blurb Biz.”

<sup>166</sup> Peter Bart, “Is Pop Culture Pooped?” *Variety* (Oct 1- 7, 2001): 384, 7,126.

<sup>167</sup> Cathy Dunkley and Claude Brodesser, “Backlots Batten Hatches,” *Variety* (Sep 24-Sep 30, 2001): 384, 6.

tightened, and badges were now required to be worn at all times.<sup>168</sup> Since then, the badges and security remain, and Hollywood got back to the business of making popular culture and money. Despite the initial assessment of some scholars that “the stark reality of a nation attacked has shaken the popular culture to its foundations,” Hollywood insiders and analysts found within a month of the attacks that beyond a surge in a small number of titles directly related to the September 11 events, viewers had already returned to the kinds of television shows they usually watched before the attacks.<sup>169</sup>

The first weekend after the attacks, Hollywood began the transition from continuous news and commentary to regular television programming by using historical documentaries that had been “repurposed” for patriotism and then continuing with the new season of network television.<sup>170</sup> Only a few network television shows immediately addressed the events of 9/11, such as *Dateline* and *The West Wing*. With time, other shows began to integrate references to 9/11 into the narrative storylines, such as the NBC series *Third Watch* or the FX series *Rescue Me*, both about fictional firefighters in New York, or the crime drama series *Law and Order*. When combat operations began in Afghanistan as part of the “War on Terror,” shows like *JAG* adjusted their storylines to have the Navy lawyers in and out of the combat zone. References to homeland security have been slower to manifest in television shows, with most appearing after the Department of Homeland Security began operations in March of 2003. The appearance of homeland security memes in television can be considered in terms of three distinct phases following 9/11: (1) tentatively dealing with 9/11 and homeland security; (2) considering homeland security as the next hot trend; and (3) using homeland security as a plot device.

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<sup>168</sup> Cathy Dunkley and Claude Brodesser, “Backlots Batten Hatches,” *Variety* (Sep 24-Sep 30, 2001): 384, 6.

<sup>169</sup> Quote by John Podhoretz, “Hollywood Searches for a New Script: Popular Culture After September 11,” within *Our Brave New World: Essays On the Impact of September 11*, edited by Wladyslaw Pleszczynski (Washington, DC: Hoover Institute Press Publication No. 514, 2002), 118; Rick Lyman with Bill Carter, “A Nation Challenged: Entertainment; In Little Time, Pop Culture is Almost Back to Normal” *New York Times*, October 4, 2001.

<sup>170</sup> Lynn Spigel, “Entertainment Wars,” 242.



## A. PHASE I: TENTATIVELY DEALING WITH HOMELAND SECURITY

The first homeland security meme in a television show appeared on October 3, 2001, when the ongoing narrative storyline of NBC's leading drama, *The West Wing*, was interrupted to air a special episode written in response to 9/11. Called "Isaac and Ishmael," the episode began with cast members speaking directly to the audience as themselves (and not as their characters), to explain that the episode would be different, to thank the New York Police and Fire Departments, and direct the audience's attention to a toll-free number at the bottom of the screen to make donations for disaster relief and victim funds. The show then continued with a group of students touring the White House who are unable to leave when the building is secured due to a terrorist bomb threat. This provides an opportunity for one of the main characters, Josh Lyman, to "teach" the students about terrorism, estranged U.S. relations with the Middle East, and eventually go on to express his indignation about the cultural customs of Islamic fundamentalism. The result, according to media studies scholar Lynn Spigel, is that America was introduced to a syntagm for framing the events of 9/11:

The episode uses historical pedagogy to solidify American national unity *against* the "enemy" rather than to encourage any real engagement with Islam, the ethics of U.S. international policy, or the consequences of the then-impending U.S. bomb strikes. Moreover, because the episode's teach-in lectures are encompassed within a more overarching melodramatic rescue narrative (the terrorist bomb threat in the White House), all of the lessons the students (and by proxy, the audience) learn are contained within a narrative about U.S. public safety. In other words, according to the logic of this rescue narrative, we learn about the "other" only for instrumental reasons—our own national security.<sup>171</sup>

What we see in this episode is a clear replication of the conceptual homeland security meme introduced to the nation almost immediately after the September 11, 2001 attacks—the good versus evil binary, with the American people as "the best in the world"<sup>172</sup> and fighting an "enemy that hides in the shadows."<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Spigel, "Entertainment Wars," 244.

<sup>172</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, "President Remarks Upon Landing" (Washington D.C.: The White House, September 16, 2001), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010916-2.html> (accessed December 19, 2007)

<sup>173</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, "Remarks by President Bush at Photo Op" (Washington D.C.: The White House, September 12, 2001), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010912-4.html> (accessed December 19, 2007)

Several months passed before other television shows tackled homeland security head on. Not surprisingly, the first primetime television shows to discuss homeland security memes were comedy shows known for their biting satire of current events: NBC's *Saturday Night Live* and *The Daily Show* on Comedy Central. After New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani appeared on *Saturday Night Live* and told America it was okay to laugh again, it still took time before Americans had something to laugh about.<sup>174</sup> Psychologists, grief counselors, and others who deal with the human condition have long understood how humor acts as a safety valve of sorts, offering a shift in perspective and energy that can restore a sense of balance in a person.<sup>175</sup> Both shows offer Americans an opportunity to both laugh and question what was occurring in the name of "homeland security."

Two episodes of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show* illustrate this process. *The Daily Show* is a comedic news and political show, complete with a host (Jon Stewart), segments by "correspondents" and interviews with guest celebrities and politicians.<sup>176</sup> On February 10, 2003, Jon Stewart began the show by reporting on the Michael Jackson alert level being raised from "mochaccino to pasty." He then transitioned to how, coincidentally, Attorney General John Ashcroft announced that the government had increased Homeland Security's alert level from yellow to orange because of "specific information" regarding threats. But upon closer analysis of the language used by Secretary Ridge in an interview by NBC morning show host Matt Lauer, Stewart realized that it really isn't "specific information at all" (Figure 15). [Click on link below the video screen shot to watch the video of the full sketch.]

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<sup>174</sup> *Saturday Night Live* "Cold Opening: 9/11 Tribute," first broadcast September 29, 2001 by NBC. Directed by Beth McCarthy Miller.

<sup>175</sup> Rabbi Earl Grollman quoted in *Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling Volume 3*, edited by Robert J. Wicks, Richard D. Parsons, Donald Caps (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2003), 232.

<sup>176</sup> Tv.com, "*The Daily Show*: Summary," <http://www.tv.com/the-daily-show/show/1293/summary.html> (accessed December 23, 2007).



<http://www.thedailyshow.com/video/index.jhtml?videoId=111995&title=warning-sickness>

**Figure 15.** Screen shot and video link to segment of *The Daily Show* discussing the recent elevation of the threat level (From 177.).

**Matt Lauer:** Mr. Secretary, if there's so much information, if you're able to connect the dots in this way to raise the level of alert, why can't you be more specific in terms of possible targets.

**Secretary Ridge:** We get general information and specific information. But none of the specific information talks about time or place or methods or means.

**Jon Stewart:** You know why none of the specific information talked about time, place, or means? Because that's the definition of general information.<sup>177</sup>

The show then moves on to analyze what this means to the citizens of New York City and concludes with a report from "Senior Terror Alert Level Analyst Rob Corddry" (Figure 16). Corddry explains to Stewart how the government derived this "specific

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<sup>177</sup> *The Daily Show*, Episode 709, originally broadcast February 10, 2003 on Comedy Central, [http://www.tv.com/the-daily-show/joe-klein/episode/498161/summary.html?tag=ep\\_list;title;97](http://www.tv.com/the-daily-show/joe-klein/episode/498161/summary.html?tag=ep_list;title;97) (accessed December 20, 2007).

information”: through observation of the result of increased use of all capitol letters and emoticons<sup>178</sup> in messages on Al Qaeda sites on the Internet.



<http://www.thedailyshow.com/video/index.jhtml?videoId=126415&title=emoticons>

**Figure 16.** Screen shot and web link to episode of *The Daily Show* discussing how the federal government obtains information to determine the threat level (From 177.).

*The Daily Show* quickly followed this episode with another on February 20, 2003 that lambasted the new “Be Ready” advertising campaign launched by the Department of Homeland Security (Figure 17).

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<sup>178</sup> Emoticons are combinations of computer keyboard characters included in a sentence that are used to convey an emotion. These are usually viewed sideways, such as typing a colon and close parenthesis to represent a happy face, :).



<http://www.thedailyshow.com/video/index.jhtml?videoId=107840&title=america-freaks-out-ii-the-re>

**Figure 17.** Screen shot and web link to episode of *The Daily Show* discussing the “Be Ready” campaign (From 179.).

**Jon Stewart:** Remember last week when you went to your hardware store and knocked over that guy in the wheelchair so you could get the last roll of duct tape? As it turns out, you didn’t have to do that. But you need never over-react to the end of the world again, thanks to a new advertising campaign launched yesterday by the Department of Homeland Security. In the ads, Secretary Tom Ridge reassures us.

**Secretary Ridge:** Families in Florida prepare themselves for the hurricane season. Families in California prepare themselves for earthquakes. Every family in America should prepare themselves for a terrorist attack.

**Jon Stewart:** It’s an interesting tactic. See, by comparing terrorist attacks to natural disasters caused by God, they’re just driving home the fact that there is nothing we can do about this.<sup>179</sup>

After lampooning the commercials, Stewart goes on to analyze whether the government illustrations on the [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) website are as helpful as the government might think.

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<sup>179</sup> *The Daily Show*, Episode 715, originally broadcast February 20, 2003 on Comedy Central, [http://www.tv.com/the-daily-show/joe-klein/episode/498161/summary.html?tag=ep\\_list;title:97](http://www.tv.com/the-daily-show/joe-klein/episode/498161/summary.html?tag=ep_list;title:97) (accessed December 20, 2007).

Both of these episodes of *The Daily Show* replicate and vary several of the original homeland security memes. In addition to the institutional meme reference to the Department of Homeland Security, there was replication of methodological memes like the Homeland Security Advisory System and the government's preparedness campaign. The concept of homeland security is replicated through the discussion of continued and heightened threats to the security of the homeland. The variants come principally from the use of satire to question the effectiveness of the methodological memes, such as the commercials with Secretary Ridge and others discussing the ever-present danger of terrorism and causing America to "freak out," in the words of Jon Stewart, or the illustrations on the [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) website that look like a giant aerosol can is attacking a human being (Figure 18).



**Figure 18.** Illustration from [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) website shown on *The Daily Show* (From 179.).

We also get our first representation of the Homeland Security Advisory System as more than a symbol, but now an icon, when Jon Stewart discusses raising the Michael Jackson threat advisory level.

## B. PHASE II: WILL HOMELAND SECURITY BE THE NEXT SMASH HIT?

When one television show becomes a hit, it can spawn a number of shows that try to replicate that original winning formula, whether medical dramas (*E.R.*), criminal dramas (*Law and Order*), or reality shows (*American Idol*). Homeland security is no exception to this quest for a lucrative storytelling genre. All four major television networks produced series that focused exclusively on homeland security memes with mixed results: NBC's *Homeland Security* was cancelled immediately after the pilot; ABC's *Threat Matrix* lasted almost one season; CBS' *The 4400* lasted four seasons; and the breakout hit of the group, FOX's *24* has continued for six seasons and has a contract for another two. A review of these four shows plus a fifth show that in reality proved to be part of a multi-million dollar fraud can provide insight into how homeland security memes replicated, varied, or failed to spread.

The first television series exclusively devoted to homeland security was *Threat Matrix*, which premiered on September 1, 2003 on ABC (Figure 19). The title of the series refers to a report that the president receives every morning that outlines the most active international and domestic threats against the United States. Because “our nation is a target; Al-Qaeda and other deadly enemies are determined to destroy our way of life; [and] an attack could come at any time, from anywhere around the globe,” the president has created, through the Department of Homeland Security, “a highly specialized, elite task force trained and equipped to counter anyone or anything that threatens our nation.”<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> ABC, “Fall Preview 2003-2004: Threat Matrix,” <http://abc.go.com/primetime/preview/2003-04/threatmatrix.html> (accessed December 22, 2007).



**Figure 19.** Screen shot from abc.com *Threat Matrix* website (From 180.).

The series promised to explore the vast and complex world of homeland security, taking audiences behind the headlines to what we are doing in the world of homeland security, why we are doing it and whether or not it is working.

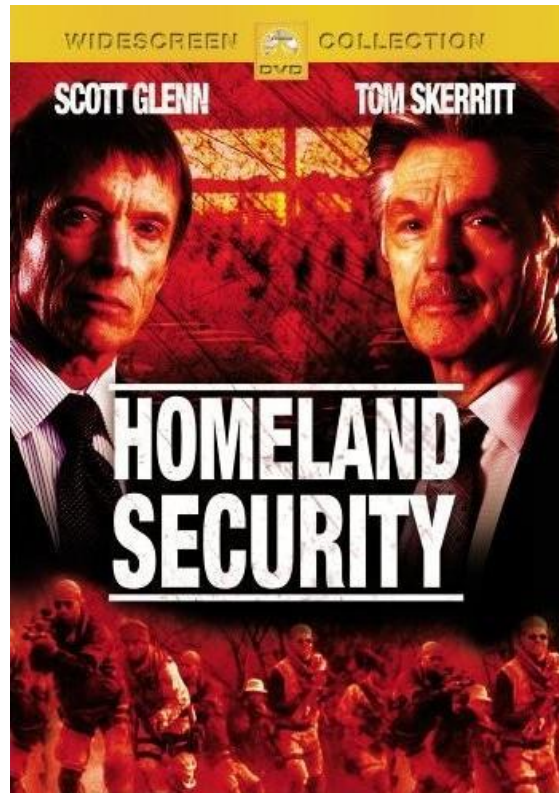
The threats during the sixteen episodes cover the full spectrum of bad people doing bad things, such as terrorists bombing a Veteran's Day memorial service, using plastic surgery to disguise themselves and infiltrate the United States and carrying out serial bombings at universities across the United States. The verdict on this new show about homeland security: "too boring and too disturbing to be entertaining."<sup>181</sup> Sixteen episodes were filmed, with the final two not shown in the United States due to poor ratings and the cancellation of the show before the season ended.

A few months later, NBC tried its hand at producing a television series related to homeland security. On April 11, 2004, NBC aired a pilot for a new TV series called *Homeland Security*. (Figure 20) <sup>182</sup>

<sup>181</sup> Cynthia Fuchs, "Homeland Security: The TV Show," PopPolitics.com, November 13, 2003, <http://www.alternet.org/rights/17176/?page=2> (accessed December 22, 2007)

<sup>182</sup> The Internet Movie Database (IMDb), "Homeland Security," <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0363685/maindetails> (accessed February 2, 2008).





**Figure 20.** Cover of U.S. release of DVD for the pilot episode of *Homeland Security* (From 182.).

Despite several well known actors (Scott Glenn, Tom Skerritt) and being released during the hype of the 9/11 Commission hearings, the show was a flop and the series cancelled before any episodes were filmed. Movie reviews on the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) were nearly unanimous in their assessment that the plot was confusing, character development unsatisfying, and it raised more questions than it answered. Concerns with the show included what appeared to be “propaganda fear-mongering” and a failure to clarify how *Homeland Security* was set up and its boundaries for the homeland.<sup>183</sup>

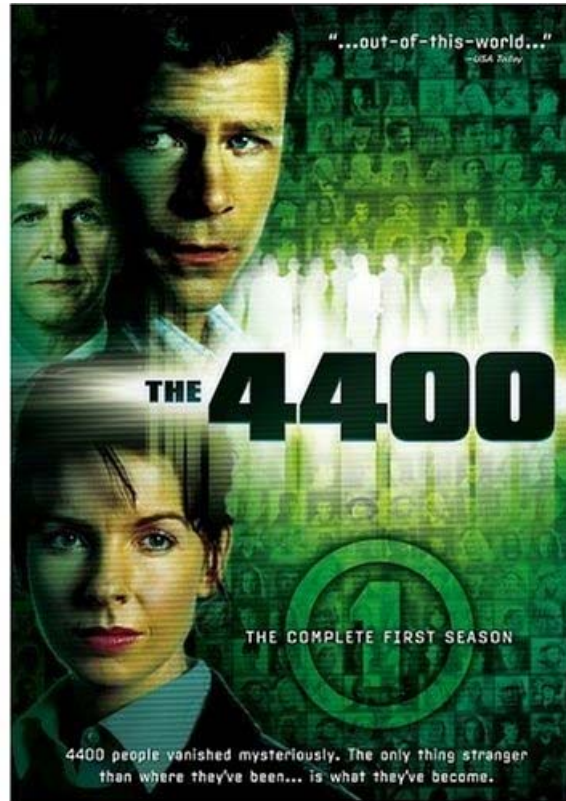
CBS Paramount Network was more successful with its science-fiction drama called *The 4400*, which aired on the USA network channel (Figure 21).<sup>184</sup> The premise of the show is that 4,400 people disappeared from Earth over the course of the past four

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<sup>183</sup> The Internet Movie Database (IMDb), “IMDb User Comments for *Homeland Security*,” <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0363685/usercomments> (accessed October 23, 2007).

<sup>184</sup> *The 4400* website, <http://www.usanetwork.com/series/the4400/> (accessed February 2, 2008).

decades and all return to a beach on the coast of Washington in a bright beam of light. Despite the passage of time, none has aged, many have special paranormal capabilities, and no one seems to recall what happened to them. A division of the fictional Department of Homeland Security, the NTAC (National Threat Assessment Command), is responsible for investigating what happened.



**Figure 21.** Cover of U.S. release of DVD for the first season of *The 4400* (From 184.).

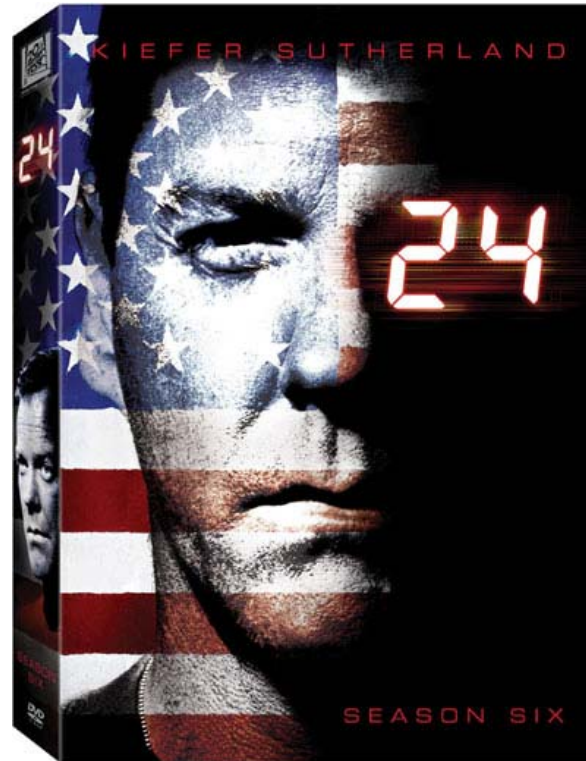
Early during the first season, writers established that the NTAC has determined that there is a terrorist group among the 4400 trying to redirect the course of history.<sup>185</sup> The viewers eventually learn that the people were abducted not by aliens, but by humans from the future. The show concluded after four seasons.

FOX was the most successful of all the networks with its new counterterrorism show, *24*, that premiered November 6, 2001 (Figure 22). For the past six seasons,

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<sup>185</sup> *The 4400*, “Becoming,” Episode 3, originally broadcast July 25, 2004 on USA Network. Directed by David Straiton and written by Graig Sweeny.

American hero Jack Bauer, a government agent working for the fictitious CIA Counterterrorism Unit in Los Angeles, has just 24 hours to stop terrorists from doing harm.



**Figure 22.** Cover of U.S. release of DVD for the sixth season of *24* (From 186.).

Several homeland security memes are woven throughout the various seasons, with the most obvious occurring during seasons five and six. Season five, which aired January 15, 2006 through May 22, 2006, had the highest ratings thus far of any of the six seasons, with an average of over 13.7 million people watching each week.<sup>187</sup> The plot narrative for the season incorporated the institutional homeland security meme of the Department of Homeland Security, but with a twist. The Department is portrayed as an institution comprised of overbearing bureaucrats who swoop in to take over the Counter Terrorism

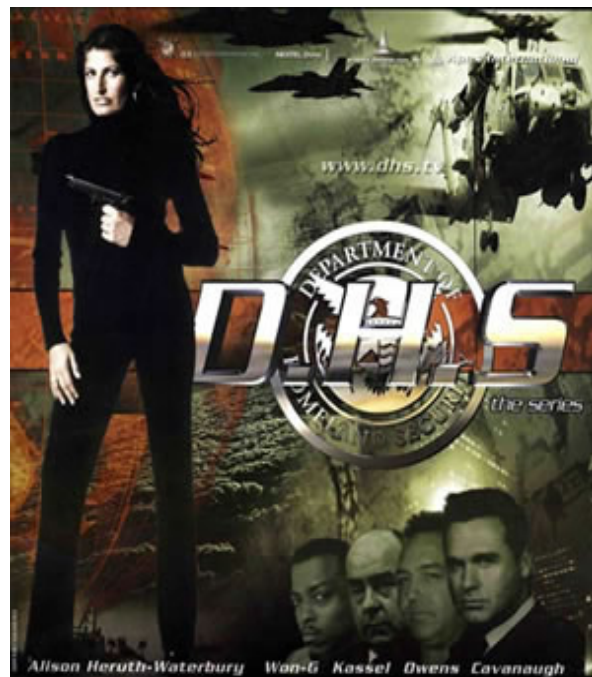
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<sup>186</sup> David Lambert, "24 – Package Art & Full Press Release for 24 – Season 6 DVDs," TVshowsonDVD.com, September 4, 2007, <http://www.tvshowsondvd.com/news/24-Season-6-Press-Release-Box-Art/8004> (accessed February 2, 2008).

<sup>187</sup> "Series: 2005-06 Primetime Wrap," *Hollywood Reporter*, May 26, 2006, [http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/hr/search/article\\_display.jsp?vnu\\_content\\_id=1002576393](http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/hr/search/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1002576393) (accessed December 22, 2007).

Unit in Los Angeles. During season six, over 13 million viewers watched a display of the worst case homeland security scenario (and conceptual meme) that the Bush Administration warned the public about—terrorists detonating a nuclear bomb on U.S. soil. This drastic event then causes the senior government officials on the show, and viewers at home, to consider to what extent civil liberties should be curtailed in the name of homeland security.

The final homeland security show is one that only existed as a hoax. In December 2006, Joseph M. Medawar was sentenced to a year in prison and ordered to pay \$3.4 million in restitution to investors after fraudulently claiming to be producing a show with government backing about the Department of Homeland Security (Figure 23).



**Figure 23.** Promotional poster for *DHS: The Series* (From 190.).

The show was pitched to investors between 2003-2004 as a drama that told authentic tales on the war on terrorism with the supposed cooperation from top national security authorities, including President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Asa Hutchinson, and Christopher Cox (CA-R), then chairman of the U.S House of Representatives

Homeland Security Committee.<sup>188</sup> The lengths to which Medawar went to convince others that this was a real show are remarkable. Readers can open the following link (which was still on the Internet as of February 2008), <http://www.dhstheseries.tv/>, to find promotional items such as a trailer for the show, cast and crew information, and even fictional news releases.<sup>189</sup>

Much of the money raised for the show was done through churchgoers who were promised that the DHS storylines would reinforce Christian values. At the invitation of television evangelist Benny Hinn, Medawar appeared on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, a religious cable channel, to promote the show.<sup>190</sup> Part of the success of this scheme was because “[Medawar] was hanging out with the right people. When he said President Bush was involved and he had his OK, and he’s got all these men of God involved in it, there’s nothing in me that would let me think of this man as a con man,” according to James Barden, a Virginia-based evangelist and Christian filmmaker who was paid with worthless stock to participate in the “DHS” project. A few well-placed connections opened doors to potential investors for the project and revealed how much people wanted to believe in the goals of such a project. California Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (CA-R), who attended the same church with Medawar, helped facilitate a meeting between the supposed leading star, Heruth-Waterbury and several other Republican Congressmen because “Helping someone get an accurate picture of how government works is something I’d do for anybody.”<sup>191</sup>

What these four shows demonstrate is that homeland security can be a powerful meme for television shows but much of the success depends on how the memes are packaged. The pitch for *DHS: The Series* was strong enough for Hollywood power

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<sup>188</sup> “Hollywood Homeland Security Hoax Snares Bush, Cox in Cameo Bits,” *Bloomberg News*, January 6, 2006, <http://www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=/headlines06/0106-06.htm> (accessed January 2, 2007).

<sup>189</sup> *D.H.S.: the Series* website, [http://www.dhstheseries.tv/news/hollywood\\_reporter.htm](http://www.dhstheseries.tv/news/hollywood_reporter.htm) (accessed February 2, 2008).

<sup>190</sup> “Hollywood Homeland Security Hoax Snares Bush, Cox in Cameo Bits,” *Bloomberg News*, January 6, 2006, <http://www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=/headlines06/0106-06.htm> (accessed January 2, 2007).

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*



players, Congressional leaders, and private investors to open doors and open wallets. However, the subsequent arrests and convictions for fraud have minimized the likelihood Hollywood producers will produce a prime-time television called DHS for some time. Another factor reducing the appeal of homeland security shows is that the two real television shows exclusively devoted to the institutional, conceptual, and methodological homeland security memes, *Threat Matrix* and *Homeland Security*, were flops with the viewers. Too real and too boring meant that viewers would tune out, and the memes eventually lost traction. Audiences seemed to prefer more complex narratives such as in *The 4400* and *24*, which is consistent with the central premise of Steven Johnson's 2005 book, *Everything Bad is Good for You: How Today's Popular Culture is Actually Making Us Smarter*.<sup>192</sup> Sprawling casts and a maze of subplots have made other television shows like HBO's *The Sopranos*, NBC's *Heroes*, and ABC's *Lost* successful season after season.<sup>193</sup> Producers realized it was more effective to reference homeland security rather than focus on it. The end result is that by the beginning of the 2003-2004 television season, Hollywood producers had shifted away from focusing exclusively on homeland security and instead used homeland security memes within shows when it suited them.

### **C: PHASE III: HOMELAND SECURITY AS A PLOT DEVICE**

On December 22, 2007, a keyword search for "homeland security" was conducted on the leading television show archives website, tv.com. It resulted in identifying 65 episodes of primetime television shows that have used homeland security memes. These results were combined with top Google search results for "TV and Homeland Security", accessing individual television show websites and personal viewing notes of the author, to compile data on primetime television shows that have used homeland security memes in one or more episodes since October 2003. From comedy to drama to science fiction,

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<sup>192</sup> Steven Johnson, *Everything Bad is Good for You: How Today's Popular Culture is Actually Making Us Smarter* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2005).

<sup>193</sup> Brian Lowry, "Taking Increasing Risks, TV is No Longer the Boob Tube," *Variety*, [http://www.variety.com/index.asp?layout=print\\_story&articleid=VR1117949050&categoryid=1682](http://www.variety.com/index.asp?layout=print_story&articleid=VR1117949050&categoryid=1682) (accessed January 29, 2007).

homeland security memes have typically been used either as plot devices to advance or resolve the plot of the story, or more simply, to get a desired reaction from the viewers such as a laugh. The matrix in Appendix 1 captures all references to homeland security memes found by the author between 2001-2007. Selected episodes will be discussed in more detail below to highlight how the original homeland security memes have varied over the past four years.

## **1. Institutional Homeland Security Memes**

Institutional memes about the Department of Homeland Security have appeared in numerous television shows. While it is always portrayed as a federal government agency with domestic security responsibilities, most of the memes are varied to suit the needs of the show's narrative. The results may not always be flattering or accurate. For instance, during the episode "Seven Minutes to Midnight" on NBC's *Heroes*, two law enforcement officers race against time to interview a suspect who has been wrongly labeled a terrorist suspect. "He's got one hour before Homeland Security sends him down the rabbit hole as a suspected terrorist," one of the officers says to the other.<sup>194</sup> The connection between DHS and the "Alice-in-Wonderland-rabbit-hole" reference creates an impression of the institution as a counter-terrorism bureaucracy unable to efficiently differentiate between the guilty and innocent, leaving an accused in legal limbo during the process.

Another variation of the institutional meme portrays the Department of Homeland Security as an agency engaged in jurisdictional battles with other agencies, even at the expense of other agencies' objectives. *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* incorporated this meme variant in the episode called "Savant," which aired on October 16, 2007.<sup>195</sup> In the episode, a man comes home to find his wife beaten and bleeding and the only witness is his daughter who has a very rare (and real) genetic condition called Williams Syndrome. During the course of the investigation, the detectives discover that the

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<sup>194</sup> *Heroes*, "Seven Minutes to Midnight," Episode 8, originally broadcast November 13, 2006 on NBC. Directed by Paul Edwards and written by Tim Kring.

<sup>195</sup> *Law and Order: SVU*, "Savant," Episode 187, originally broadcast October 16, 2007 on NBC. Directed by Judith McCreary and written by Kate Woods, [http://www.nbc.com/Law\\_&\\_Order:\\_Special\\_Victims\\_Unit/episodes/season9/9005/savant\\_04.shtml#recap](http://www.nbc.com/Law_&_Order:_Special_Victims_Unit/episodes/season9/9005/savant_04.shtml#recap) (accessed December 24, 2007).

husband actually did not go on a business trip, and they bring him in for an interview at the police station. The interview is interrupted by Homeland Security agents who say the man, who is a biological engineer, works for the Department of Homeland Security and any information about his whereabouts is a matter of national security that cannot be disclosed. The District Attorney unsuccessfully argued before the Court to compel disclosure of the husband's whereabouts.<sup>196</sup> While the police ultimately manage to get the real assailant without the help of the Department of Homeland Security, the viewers are left with the impression of the Department of Homeland Security as an agency engaged in secret activities and with the power not to cooperate in an investigation because "the Patriot Act trumps rape and attempted murder every time."<sup>197</sup>

## **2. Methodology Homeland Security Memes**

On June 18, 2007, nearly nine million viewers tuned in to watch the third season opener for TNT's hit show, *The Closer*.<sup>198</sup> The main character of the show is Deputy Chief Brenda Leigh Johnson, head of the priority homicide division of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). Early in the episode Johnson is told by her boss, Chief Pope, that every division will have significant budget cuts. Additionally, she will have to either transfer a member of her team to the LAPD Counter Terrorism Bureau, or let one member go, preferably through early retirement. One of Johnson's sharp thinking deputies, Detective Gabriel, comes up with a solution to keep the squad together: transfer all of the team, on paper at least, from Priority Homicide to the Counter Terrorism Bureau. When the Chief points out that they are not trained for that duty, Detective Gabriel then reveals the best part of the plan: Chief Pope will receive thousands of dollars from the Department of Homeland Security to train them (which he can use toward his

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<sup>196</sup> Joshua Holmes, "SVU," [www.crimedramatv.com](http://www.crimedramatv.com), October 23, 2007, <http://www.crimedramatv.com/> (accessed December 18, 2007).

<sup>197</sup> *Law and Order: SVU*, "Savant," Episode 187, originally broadcast October 16, 2007 on NBC. Directed by Judith McCreary and written by Kate Woods, [www.tv.com/law-and-order-special-victims-unit/savant/episode/1141680/summary.html](http://www.tv.com/law-and-order-special-victims-unit/savant/episode/1141680/summary.html) (accessed December 24, 2007).

<sup>198</sup> R. Thomas Umstead, "TNT Series Closes Out the Competition," Multichannel News, June 19, 2006, <http://www.multichannel.com/article/CA6344712.html?display=Top+Stories>; "TNT's Season 3 Premiere of the Closer is Best of All Time," press released by TNT, [www.thefutoncritic.com](http://www.thefutoncritic.com), <http://www.thefutoncritic.com/news.aspx?id=20070619tnt01> (accessed December 26, 2007).



overall budget problems) and since the Counter Terrorism Bureau only needs personnel when the threat level is raised, the officers can continue performing their homicide investigations. Otherwise, Chief Pope would just be “paying people to stand around.”<sup>199</sup> The Chief loves the plan and agrees to implement it immediately. While the solution is clever, the homeland security grant meme has just been varied in a way that the Congress may never have anticipated when creating the Homeland Security Grant Program.

Homeland security training is one of the new homeland security methodology memes introduced by the government following 9/11. This meme is presented in the September 30, 2006, *Saturday Night Live* sketch: “Homeland Security Refresher” (Figure 24).<sup>200</sup>



<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7912168778416342230&q=homeland+security+refresher&total=2&start=0&num=10&so=0&type=search&plindex=0>

**Figure 24.** Screen shot and web link to episode of *Saturday Night Live* about the new rules for bringing liquids on planes (From 200.).

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<sup>199</sup> *The Closer*, “Homewrecker,” Episode 301, first broadcast June 18, 2007 on TNT. Directed by Michael M. Robin and written by James Duff and Mike Berchem.

<sup>200</sup> *Saturday Night Live*, “Homeland Security Refresher,” first broadcast September 30, 2006 on NBC. Directed by Don Roy King, [http://www.nbc.com/Saturday\\_Night\\_Live/recaps/#cat=32&mea=1469&ima=30183](http://www.nbc.com/Saturday_Night_Live/recaps/#cat=32&mea=1469&ima=30183) (accessed December 30, 2007).

In the skit, two men from the Department of Homeland Security have come to train America's last line against terrorism: airport security employees. The trainers begin the session by asking the employees to name some liquids and gels. They are met by blank faces until someone tepidly suggests "water" as being a liquid. As the training continues, the Transportation and Security Agency screeners review the new rule that allows travelers to bring up to three liquids or gels in their carry-on luggage as long as they are in a see-through plastic bag, prompting someone to ask why the rule changed. The trainers respond that the FBI did tests revealing that three ounces of liquids can not blow up an airplane. Someone then asks what is to stop two people from each bringing three ounces and meeting on the plane to combine them. That question totally stymies the Homeland Security representatives. Another screener says he has a "homeland security related question: why do America's chemical plants remain woefully unprotected despite the fact that studies show they are the next most valued targets by terrorists?" Again, the Homeland Security trainers have no idea how to respond. Eventually they admit that "we of the Department of Homeland Security have way more questions than answers...but what I do know is that you can't say we don't know what we are doing so long as we have FEMA."<sup>201</sup> The irony of that statement made after the lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina is not lost on the studio audience or viewers at home.

### **3. Conceptual Homeland Security Memes**

One of the most disturbing homeland security memes is the concept that there is an enemy that wants to harm us and is preparing to attack the United States right now. This meme serves as the underlying premise of Showtime's series *Sleeper Cell*. The term "sleeper cell" refers to a group of terrorists who are inactive, blending in with their surroundings, until a decision is made that it is time for them to carry out an attack. The show follows an undercover FBI agent who infiltrates a sleeper cell in Los Angeles and

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<sup>201</sup> *Saturday Night Live*, "Homeland Security Refresher," episode 1469, first broadcast September 30, 2006 on NBC. Directed by Don Roy King, [http://www.nbc.com/Saturday\\_Night\\_Live/recaps/#cat=32&mea=1469&ima=30183](http://www.nbc.com/Saturday_Night_Live/recaps/#cat=32&mea=1469&ima=30183) (accessed December 30, 2007).

then tries to thwart the attack. The person who orchestrates the terrorist group is an Islamic fundamentalist named Faris Al-Farik, who explains what motivates him in a video clip on the show's website:

*Too many years, Americans have deluded themselves into thinking they're exceptional; that the laws of history do not apply to them. They have defied God and proclaimed themselves "masters of destiny." Now is the time to remind Americans only God is the Lord of Islam. Your world is never going to be safe again, so you make peace with Islam on our terms.*<sup>202</sup>

The show attempts to bring to light those whom the Bush administration has labeled "the enemy that hides in the shadows."<sup>203</sup>

There is a sizeable percentage of Americans who believe that the events on September 11, 2001 were actually the result of an elaborate conspiracy orchestrated by the American government. Commonly referred to by adherents as the "9/11 Truth" movement, it is best represented by a documentary called "Loose Change" which has been viewed online by an estimated 10 million people.<sup>204</sup> "South Park" tackled this government conspiracy movement head on in an episode called "Mystery of the Urinal Deuce," which aired on October 11, 2006. When someone at South Park Elementary School defecates in a urinal, one of the teachers searches for the boy responsible. One of the students, Cartman, begins to rant that it was a conspiracy, "just like 9/11." The other students simply brush him off, claiming that he, and the quarter of the country that believes in a 9/11 government conspiracy, are all "retarded." After the "Hardly Boys" detectives are brought in to investigate, President Bush, surrounded by his senior advisors (Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Rice) admits that the government *wasn't* behind 9/11. President Bush explains that the government actually runs all the websites that claim they were responsible, making the conspiracy theories actually a government conspiracy

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<sup>202</sup> Showtime, *Sleeper Cell* information site, <http://www.sho.com/site/sleepercell/home.do> (accessed December 30, 2007).

<sup>203</sup> U.S. Executive of the President, "Remarks by President Bush at Photo Op" (Washington D.C.: The White House, September 12, 2001), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010912-4.html> (accessed December 19, 2007)

<sup>204</sup> Nancy Jo Sales, "Click Here for Conspiracy," *Vanity Fair*, August 2006, <http://www.vanityfair.com/ontheweb/features/2006/08/loosechange200608> (accessed December 27, 2007).

themselves. The point, Bush explains, is that, since one-fourth of Americans are "retarded" and will believe conspiracies, the government wants them to believe that it is all-powerful and could get away with the worst terrorist attack in history, while they tell the other 75% of the country the truth---that 9/11 was caused (in the words of one South Park student) by "a bunch of pissed off Muslims."<sup>205</sup>

#### **D. CONCLUSION: THE NEW HOLLYWOOD NORMALCY**

During the past six years, devoting a show entirely to homeland security has not proved to be a lucrative formula for Hollywood producers. Instead, Hollywood draws upon homeland security memes as it would any other meme that suits the needs of a particular show. One final episode will be discussed to demonstrate this effect—"Somebody to Love" from NBC's *30 Rock*, which aired on November 15, 2007.<sup>206</sup> The television show revolves around the head writer of a live variety show named Liz Lemon. During this episode, Liz grows concerned that her Middle Eastern neighbor, Raheem, may be a terrorist because of his peculiar behavior. After noticing maps on the walls of his apartment and seeing him with another Middle Eastern male filming each other going through an obstacle course on a playground, Liz feels like she should do something. This message is reinforced by large signs she sees on bus stops and other public spaces that say: "If You See Something, Say Something" and "If You Suspect Anything, Do Everything." She asks the producer of her show for advice. He immediately says in a firm voice, "Be an American—call it in," and then gives her the number of someone senior at the Department of Homeland Security. Liz calls the number and before she can say a word, a somber male voice on the other end says "Who is he and where can we find him?" The next day, a friend of Liz comes in her office to tell her that Raheem was gone:

Frank: *Some dudes took Raheem last night!*

Liz: *Huh. Sounds like an American hero saw something and said something.*

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<sup>205</sup> *South Park*, "Mystery of the Urinal Deuce," Episode 148, first broadcast October 11, 2006 by Comedy Central. Directed and written by Trey Parker.

<sup>206</sup> *30 Rock*, "Somebody to Love," Episode 207, first broadcast November 15, 2007 by NBC. Directed by Beth McCarthy Miller and written by Tina Fey and Kay Cannon.

Frank: *Elizabeth Lemon, I can't believe you did that! Raheem is a good guy.*

Liz: *You seem to be defending Raheem an awful lot. I'd hate to have to make another phone call.* (Her hand picks up the telephone handset.)

Frank: (Backing out the door) *Uh, we're cool. I renounce Raheem. Raheem is a bad guy. USA number one!*

The episode concludes with Liz finding out that Raheem and his brother were not terrorists. The odd behavior was part of filming an audition tape to submit to be selected as competitors in a television show called *The Amazing Race*. She feels awful when she sees Raheem limping down the hall back to his apartment and he tells her that he had been tortured by the government.

This episode takes the original homeland security memes of DHS (institutional meme), “the enemy is lurking in the shadows” (conceptual meme), and reporting suspicious incidents (methodological meme) and then varies them in the following manner: DHS is an all-powerful institution that can take someone away in the night (institutional meme); suspicious acting Middle Eastern male neighbors living next to you could be a potential terrorist (conceptual); and good Americans report suspicious behavior to Homeland Security (methodological meme). The laughs come from the exaggeration of the original memes that have become common place. The gasp comes when Liz Lemon does what good Americans are supposed to do, only to discover that she was wrong, very wrong. Her once peaceful, America-loving neighbor was now hurt, angry, and motivated to retaliate.

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## VIII. FINDINGS: HOMELAND SECURITY MEMES IN MUSIC

Music has played an important part of Americans' healing and understanding of major events throughout history, and the response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 are no exception.<sup>207</sup> Similar to the age-old practice of gathering around a campfire and listening to a storyteller recount a story that has been passed down from generation to generation, through a song, the listener has the ability to be a part of something larger than himself. For some, there are no words to adequately describe the events of 9/11 and so the music is used to convey emotions that cannot be articulated. Consider, for example, the music composed by Randy Johnson to accompany the New York Police Department's 5th Anniversary 9/11 Memorial video (Figure 25).<sup>208</sup>



<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-9143542059362717312>

**Figure 25.** Screen shot and web link to “WTC – 9/11: 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 9/11 Memorial Music Video” (From 208.).

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<sup>207</sup> John Metzger, “9/11 in Song: Bruce Springsteen – The Rising; Steve Earle – Jerusalem,” *The Music Box*, vol. 9 (October 2002) <http://www.musicbox-online.com/9-11.html> (accessed June 10, 2007).

<sup>208</sup> Alex Johnson Productions, “WTC – 9/11: 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 9/11 Memorial Music Video,” August 21, 2006, <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-9143542059362717312> (accessed February 2, 2008).

The low, sustained notes of the cello are joined by the wail of violins, while in the background sounds of people crying and distant sirens barely register in the conscious mind due to the powerful images of destruction, loss, shock, and grief. For others, it is the combination of lyrics and sound that is critical for undergoing a cathartic process and being part of a collective experience. This was the intent behind the benefit concert, *America: A Tribute to Heroes*, organized by actor George Clooney and broadcast uninterrupted and commercial-free on September 21, 2001 over thirty-five network and cable stations, as well as on thousands of radio stations and via the Internet. On a dark stage illuminated by hundreds of candles, singers performed songs of hope and healing, with actors sharing encouraging words. In 2004, *Rolling Stone* magazine selected this concert as one of the fifty moments that changed the way we listen to music and see the world.<sup>209</sup> Homeland security memes within music are less obvious to spot compared to other modes of discourse such as books or television, yet still can be found if we listen closely.

#### **A. CAPTURING THE IMPACT OF 9/11**

There have been a number of songs written by well-known artists across the music spectrum that were inspired by the events of 9/11, such as Bruce Springsteen (“The Rising”); Neil Young (“Let’s Roll”); Paul McCartney (“Freedom”); Toby Keith (“Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue”); Aaron Tippin (“Where the Stars and Stripes and Eagles Fly”); Alan Jackson (“Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)”); Trace Atkins (“Welcome to Hell”); Michael W. Smith (“There She Stands”) and Nanci Griffith (“Good Night, New York). Listeners also tuned into songs written at an earlier time but that now had new meaning for them, such as “God Bless America” by Irving Berlin, which was sung as part of a spontaneous gathering of elected officials on the steps of the Capitol on September 12, 2001 after a news conference.<sup>210</sup> Other songs

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<sup>209</sup> Damien Cave, Matt Diehl, Gavin Edwards, Jenny Eliscu, David Fricke, Lauren Gitlin, Matt Hendrickson, Kirk Miller, Austin Scaggs and Rob Sheffield, *Rolling Stone*, June 24, 2004, [http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/6085455/the\\_moments](http://www.rollingstone.com/news/story/6085455/the_moments) (accessed November 29, 2007).

<sup>210</sup> “In Depth Special: The War Against Terror,” CNN.com, <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/trade.center/rescue.video.09.html> (accessed January 26, 2008).



include “A Day in the Life” by Paul McCartney, Lee Greenwood’s “Proud To Be An American,” Cassandra Wilson’s remake of Cyndi Lauper’s song, “Time After Time,” and the civil rights hymn “We Shall Overcome.”<sup>211</sup> Hoover Institute scholar Stanley Kurtz has identified two main themes within these immediate post-9/11 response songs: a rueful lament or angry American, best represented at the extreme by Bruce Springsteen’s “The Rising” and Toby Keith’s “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue,” respectively.

The lyrics of the title track of Springsteen’s post 9/11 album, *The Rising*, describe the mental and physical burdens carried by a firefighter (ostensibly from the New York Fire Department). The listener peers into the mind of a fireman who has lost track of how far he has carried his heavy load of oxygen and hose into a fire that will soon take his life. His burden and death articulated in the lyrics are allusions to the cross and the resurrection of Christ, with the fireman becoming a redemptive figure for us all.<sup>212</sup> The album has had a powerful effect on many Americans, with the music critic for Slate.com going as far as to characterize Bruce Springsteen as “the Poet Laureate of 9/11.”<sup>213</sup>

If Bruce Springsteen is the poet Laureate of 9/11, Toby Keith must represent the Everyman. Unlike the reflective approach taken by Springsteen, Keith’s 9/11 anthem, “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue (The Angry American)” called out for vengeance. The song was written in part as a tribute to the memory of his father who died early in 2001, and in part in response to the events of 9/11. The song combines the familiar patriotic images of the Statute of Liberty and the American eagle, with the pride of a fighter who is knocked down but then gets up and battles his way to victory:

*Soon as we could see clearly  
Through our big black eye  
Man, we lit up your world  
Like the Fourth of July.*

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<sup>211</sup> For more information on songs that have had special meaning for listeners after 9/11, visit the following link to hear a special edition of National Public Radio’s “On Point: The Music You’ve Turned to Since 9/11”, first aired on December 31, 2001, [http://www.onpointradio.org/shows/2001/12/20011231\\_b\\_main.asp](http://www.onpointradio.org/shows/2001/12/20011231_b_main.asp) (accessed June 10, 2007).

<sup>212</sup> Stanley Kurtz, “Those 9/11 Songs: Are You with Springsteen or Keith?” *National Review Online*, August 27, 2002, <http://www.nationalreview.com/kurtz/kurtz082702.asp> (accessed June 10, 2007).

<sup>213</sup> A.O. Scott, “The Poet Laureate of 9/11: Apocalypse and Salvation on Springsteen’s New Album,” *Slate*, August 6, 2002, <http://www.slate.com/id/2069047/> (accessed January 26, 2008).

*This big dog will fight  
When you rattle his cage  
And you'll be sorry that you messed with the U.S. of A.  
'Cause we'll put a boot in your ass  
It's the American way.*<sup>214</sup>

The attitude of defiant patriotism expressed by Keith had a significant impact in particular on many of the soldiers sent to fight in Afghanistan and Iraq. “Courtesy of the USA” became a battle cry for many of the U.S. armed forces in Iraq, with the phrase emblazoned onto the sides of bombs and tanks used in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>215</sup> It also became a personal anthem for Patrick Miller, a U.S. soldier who became a prisoner of war and defiantly sang the song to his Iraqi captors.<sup>216</sup>

Somewhere in between the lament and the *lex talionis*, was a middle ground of music that tried to express thoughts and emotions without being overly patriotic (and hence jingoistic) or vengeful. Country singer Alan Jackson struck that balance with the song “Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning).” Several weeks after 9/11, Jackson penned the lyrics that explore others’ reactions through a series of questions:

*Where were you when the world stopped turning that September day  
Out in the yard with your wife and children  
Working on some stage in LA  
Did you stand there in shock at the site of  
That black smoke rising against that blue sky  
Did you shout out in anger  
In fear for your neighbor  
Or did you just sit down and cry*<sup>217</sup>

After this gentle questioning, Jackson admits that he is just a “singer of simple songs” and his only advice is to consider the message the apostle Paul sent to the Corinthians in chapter 13, verse 13 of The New Testament—“Faith, hope and love are some good things he gave us/And the greatest is love.” The song was a huge commercial success, quickly rising to the

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<sup>214</sup> Toby Keith, “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue (The Angry American),” Dreamworks Nashville, released July 23, 2003.

<sup>215</sup> “Courtesy of the Red, White & Blue: Singer Talks About His Defiantly Patriotic Songs,” CBS News, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/10/28/60II/main580469.shtml> (accessed November 9, 2007).

<sup>216</sup> Alanna Nash, “Red, White and Cowboy Blues,” USA Weekend.com, November 2, 2003 [http://www.usaweekend.com/03\\_issues/031102/031102toby\\_keith.html](http://www.usaweekend.com/03_issues/031102/031102toby_keith.html) (accessed November 9, 2007).

<sup>217</sup> Alan Jackson, “Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)” Arista Nashville, released November 2001.

top of the country singles chart within six weeks and peaking at number 28 on the Top 40 pop singles charts.<sup>218</sup> When the album was released in January 2002, it went to the top of both the country and pop album charts and was certified platinum four times over by Billboard magazine.<sup>219</sup>

These songs reflect not only different responses to 9/11, but distinct homeland security memes. The firefighter giving his life to save others in Bruce Springsteen's "The Rising" represents the homeland security methodological meme of emergency first responders as American heroes. The angry American in Toby Keith's "Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue" is packaged in the symbols and expressions of the righteous American ready to fight the evil aggressor, replicating the homeland security conceptual meme of the good versus evil binary. This is in stark contrast to the nonviolent and loving methodological approach suggested by Alan Jackson in "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)."

## **B. PATRIOTISM = DO NOT QUESTION THE POLICIES**

Initially sung only at concerts for military personnel, Keith had no intention of publicly releasing the song "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue." However, senior federal government officials quickly recognized the effect Keith's music was having on soldiers and looked for a way to increase patriotism and morale within the entire country. Several senior administration officials urged Keith to publish the song as a way of contributing to the war effort by building morale.<sup>220</sup> As the Commandant of the Marine Corps, James L. Jones, put it to Keith, "You can serve your country in other ways besides suiting up in combat."<sup>221</sup> Keith had some reservations because of the vengeful tone of the song but eventually decided it was justified since, "it was the way everybody felt when

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<sup>218</sup> "Alan Jackson Earns Fastest #1 of Any Country Artist in 4 Years," ThatsCountry.com, December 18, 2001, [http://www.thatscountry.com/artman/publish/printer\\_54.shtml](http://www.thatscountry.com/artman/publish/printer_54.shtml) (accessed November 30, 2007).

<sup>219</sup> "Alan Jackson," rockonthenet.com, [http://www.rockonthenet.com/artists-j/alanjackson\\_main.htm](http://www.rockonthenet.com/artists-j/alanjackson_main.htm) (accessed January 26, 2008).

<sup>220</sup> "Courtesy of the Red, White & Blue: Singer Talks about His Defiantly Patriotic Songs", CBS News, December 31, 2003, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/10/28/60II/main580469.shtml> (accessed November 9, 2007).

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

they saw those two buildings fall.”<sup>222</sup> Many Americans agreed, quickly pushing the single to the number one spot on the country music billboard chart.<sup>223</sup>

Keith’s strong support for the troops and his patriotic songs may have been mistaken by some listeners as support for the war in Iraq. Keith did not publicly discuss his opinion on the war until it was brought up in an interview in January 2007. For the first time, Keith publicly announced that he “never did” support the war.<sup>224</sup> Patriotism for Keith was supporting the troops and being silent on the politics of how the troops are being used. This attitude was reflected by the songs that climbed to the top of the music billboard charts—the public did not appear to support artists who were overtly political or critical of administration policies. For example, after the lead singer of the Dixie Chicks, Natalie Maines, told a British audience just days before the war in Iraq began, “Just so you know, we’re ashamed the president of the United States is from Texas,” radio stations across the country pulled the Dixie Chicks from play lists. Radio stations organized “chicken toss” parties where people could toss their Dixie Chicks albums in to a trash can and many listeners called in to stations to accuse them of being “unpatriotic.”<sup>225</sup> The backlash initially took the Dixie Chicks completely by surprise because, as Maines put it later in an interview, “I just couldn’t believe that people cared what I said.”<sup>226</sup> However, as the biggest selling group in North America during the previous eight years, their influence was far greater than they thought, both in corporate

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<sup>222</sup> Rob Walker, “Toby Keith: His Two-Fisted 9/11 Put Him on Top of the Charts,” *Slate*, August 12, 2002, <http://www.slate.com/id/2069217/> (accessed June 10, 2007).

<sup>223</sup> Billboard .com, “Toby Keith: Artist Chart History,” [http://www.billboard.com/bbcom/retrieve\\_chart\\_history.do?model.vnuArtistId=32325&model.vnuAlbumId=1059033](http://www.billboard.com/bbcom/retrieve_chart_history.do?model.vnuArtistId=32325&model.vnuAlbumId=1059033) (accessed November 9, 2007).

<sup>224</sup> Rafer Guzman, “Angry American, Toby Keith, A Self-professed 'Patriot,' Will Fearlessly Go a Country Mile to Battle Liberals, Record Labels and Fellow Musicians Such as the Dixie Chicks,” *Newsday*, January 28, 2007, <http://www.newsday.com/entertainment/music/ny-ettoby0128.0.6077773.story?coll=ny-music-headlines> (accessed November 9, 2007).

<sup>225</sup> “Dixie Chicks Pulled from Air after Bashing Bush,” *cnn.com*, March 14, 2003, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/SHOWBIZ/Music/03/14/dixie.chicks.reut> (accessed November 9, 2007).

<sup>226</sup> Barbara Kopple, Cecilia Peck, directors, *Shut Up & Sing*, The Weinstein Company and Cabin Creek Films, 2006.

America and with the public.<sup>227</sup> The Dixie Chicks were seen as the all-American girls from Texas and good-girls do not publicly criticize the president while at war, especially while in a foreign country.

One of the few musicians willing to make a record that overtly challenged the politics of the day was country music singer, Steve Earle. Earle's record, *Jerusalem*, was released in September 2002 and examined a broad range of issues facing American culture, including 9/11. One song from the album caused a particular stir and that was "John Walker's Blues." The song was Earle's attempt to understand John Walker Lindh, the American citizen who was captured on the Afghanistan battlefield with Taliban fighters in 2001.<sup>228</sup> Written from the perspective of Lindh, it attempts to show how Lindh's actions did not occur in a vacuum; rather they were the result of a spiritual and physical journey from MTV America to the words of Mohammad. For some critics, writing a song about Lindh was the equivalent to committing "cultural treason."<sup>229</sup> The *New York Post* derided the album in an article published under the headline "Twisted Ballad Honors Tali-Rat" and Nashville radio talk-show host Steve Gill included Earle in a group of public figures who "hate America."<sup>230</sup> The very differing public reactions to the flag-waving Toby Keith and the critical Natalie Maines and Steve Earle leads to a very disturbing conceptual meme-- being patriotic meant not to question the methods used by the government to preserve homeland security. The few artists and members of the press who supported Earle did so because they saw Earle as one of the few writers willing to challenge the current trend of post 9/11 music and the public dialogue about how to maintain homeland security.

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<sup>227</sup> Barbara Kopple, Cecilia Peck, directors, *Shut Up & Sing*, The Weinstein Company and Cabin Creek Films, 2006.

<sup>228</sup> George Sanchez, "Music After 9/11: Puttling [sic] Politics Into Verse," *frictionmagazine.com*, October 16, 2002, [http://www.frictionmagazine.com/song/news/911music\\_print.html](http://www.frictionmagazine.com/song/news/911music_print.html) (accessed July 30, 2007).

<sup>229</sup> Josh Daniel, "Duck of Earle," *Slate*, September 23, 2002, <http://www.slate.com/id/2071297> (accessed January 26, 2008).

<sup>230</sup> Ian Bruce, "US Country Singer Steve Earle Subject to Witch Hunt," *World Socialist Website*, August 7, 2002, <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/aug2002/earl-a07.shtml> (accessed July 30, 2007).

### C. POST 9/11 CONFUSION

Following the first wave of songs written after 9/11, there was a noticeable absence of mainstream popular songs processing how America should appropriately respond on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The song “911 For Peace” by Anti-Flag captures this sense of confusion with the chorus “I don’t want to die/I don’t want to kill/I don’t want to kill/I don’t want to die/We are all human/It’s time to prove it.”<sup>231</sup> If you were ready to stop grieving but not willing to pick up your gun and fight, how should you feel? Damien Cave explored this dilemma in an article published in *salon.com* shortly before the first anniversary of 9/11, called “Forbidden Thought About 9/11.” Based on a reader survey, Cave concluded:

Cooperation and empathy were not the only emotions of the day; they were simply the publicly expressed emotions of the day. Many of us didn't just feel sad or angry or proud in the face of the day's horrors -- or when President Bush and the media requested it. We also felt indifferent, confused, selfish, annoyed and, in some cases, even happy or excited. We had thoughts that we couldn't explain or control, thoughts we didn't express, except perhaps in whispered conversations.<sup>232</sup>

Despite the wide range of emotions, few musicians were willing to move beyond the themes of shock and anger to deal with these “forbidden thoughts” in their music.

As time passes, the focus of homeland security-related music shifted noticeably towards examining the effect of the Iraqi War on our nation. Protest music became more acceptable by the critics and public alike; it was no longer “cultural treason” to directly or obliquely question the politics of the day. During the past several years artists young and old have released songs critical of the war and government policies: Neil Young (“Let’s Impeach the President”), Pink (“Dear Mr. President”), Indigo Girls (“Pendulum Swinger”), Green Day (“American Idiot”), Bright Eyes (“When the President Talks to God”), and Bruce Springsteen’s album of Seeger protest music called “We Shall Overcome—The Seeger Sessions.” Songs also continue to be produced that highlight

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<sup>231</sup> Anti-Flag, “911 For Peace,” A-F Records (2002).

<sup>232</sup> Damien Cave, “Forbidden Thought About 9/11,” *Salon*, September 7, 2002, <http://dir.salon.com/story/mwt/feature/2002/09/07/forbidden/> (accessed November 30, 2007).

the personal impact of the war describing soldiers as unsung heroes doing their duty (Toby Keith—"American Soldier"), with some returning home for tearful reunions with loved ones (Mark Shultz—"Letters From War") and others making the ultimate sacrifice (Metallica—"For Whom the Bell Tolls"). This brief overview of music following 9/11 demonstrates the powerful effect music has on people and how it helped shape the developing story of homeland security. Similar to the effect of a well-told story, music allows the listener to extend his or her experience and enter sympathetically into the lives of others.<sup>233</sup> However, there has yet to be a single piece of music universally accepted as definitively telling the story of 9/11. Instead there is a mosaic of music targeted to specific emotions and political beliefs.

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<sup>233</sup> Margaret Redfield, "The Expressive Utterance, Folk and Popular," *Journal of American Folklore* 69, No. 274 (Oct-Dec 1956): 357-362, 359.

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## IX. FINDINGS: HOMELAND SECURITY MEMES IN IMAGES

### A. SELECTING IMAGES TO MEMORIALIZE 9/11

In his book *Watching the World Change: The Stories Behind the Images of 9/11*, David Friend observes that "September 11, simply put, was the most widely observed and photographed breaking-news event in human history....September 11 was enacted *for* the audience — an audience that would remember every nuance."<sup>234</sup> There were literally thousands of images taken on 9/11 and the days that followed. The images captured in Figures 26 through 29 represent a selection of the top search results from queries for "homeland security images" and "9/11 images" through the Google Internet search engine.<sup>235</sup>



**Figure 26. The Statue of Liberty on September 11, 2001 (From 235.).**

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<sup>234</sup> David Friend, *Watching the World Change: The Stories Behind the Images of 9/11* (New York: Picador, 2007), 36.

<sup>235</sup> National Park Service, "9.11.01 Remembrance," <http://www.nps.gov/remembrance/statue/index.html> (accessed February 3, 2008).



**Figure 27. “Shattered” by James Nachtwey (From 236.).**

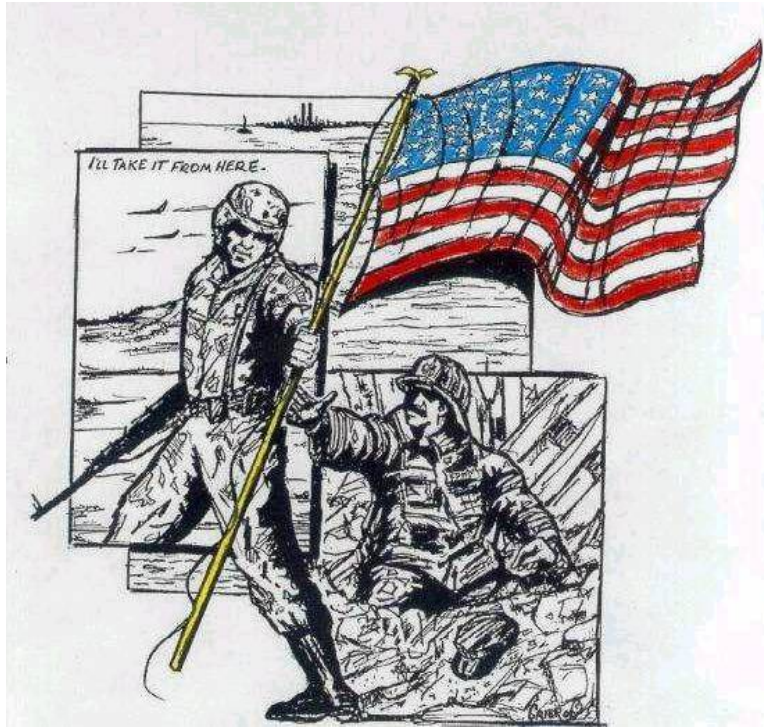


**Figure 28. “Raising the Flag at Ground Zero” by Thomas Franklin (From 237.).**

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<sup>236</sup> James Nachtwey, “Shattered,” *TIME*, <http://www.time.com/time/photoessays/shattered/14.html> (accessed February 3, 2008).

<sup>237</sup> “Raising the Flag at Ground Zero,” taken by Thomas Franklin for *The Record*, (Bergen County, NJ), <http://www.windsofchange.net/archives/005499.php> (accessed November 2, 2007).



**Figure 29. "I'll Take it From Here" by Jeff Grier (From 238.).**

These images reflect the reality of the attacks and American response in a way that does not overwhelm the viewer. These images have also come to symbolize more than what is literally depicted. For instance, the photograph of the firefighters bears a striking resemblance to the famous photograph of victorious Marines hoisting the American flag on Iwo Jima, while the sketch of a firefighter at Ground Zero raising an American flag and passing it on like a baton in a relay race to a soldier armed for battle symbolizes the new connection between the domestic and the foreign aspects of homeland security.<sup>238</sup> This association between inspirational and patriotic images with 9/11 began what Garrison Keillor has described as “a sort of mythification of the day into which George W. Bush and Rudolph Giuliani entered, bearing spears and shields.”<sup>239</sup>

<sup>238</sup> Jeff Grier, “I’ll Take it from Here,” *The Flagpole.com*, [http://www.theflagpole.com/image\\_full\\_size\\_pages/pass\\_the\\_colors.htm](http://www.theflagpole.com/image_full_size_pages/pass_the_colors.htm) (accessed February 3, 2008).

<sup>239</sup> Garrison Keillor, “Bearing Witness,” *New York Times*, September 3, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/03/books/review/Keillor.t.html> (accessed December 28, 2007).

The images above are similar to those also found in newspapers, magazines, online tributes, calendars, and computer screen savers. But how many readers have seen the photograph in Figure 30? (Caution: the next image has been considered extremely unsettling by some viewers).



**Figure 30. “Falling Man” by Richard Drew (From 240.).**

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<sup>240</sup> Tom Junod, “The Falling Man,” *Esquire Magazine*, [http://www.esquire.com/features/ESQ0903-SEP\\_FALLINGMAN](http://www.esquire.com/features/ESQ0903-SEP_FALLINGMAN) (accessed February 3, 2008).

Associated Press photographer Richard Drew has described his photograph of a man falling from the World Trade Center as “the most famous picture nobody’s ever seen.”<sup>241</sup> A few newspapers, to include the *New York Times*, published the photo once but quickly pulled it from circulation. Even two years later, citizens were still writing to the editor of the *New York Times* to protest the newspapers decision to initially publish the photo.<sup>242</sup> This image of the falling man reflects an unexpected dimension to how individuals reacted to 9/11: the most disturbing images connected to 9/11 were self-censored by photographers and editors who either refused to initially capture on film what they saw or later show them to the public on television or in print. Although one of the goals of photography is to convey reality, for some, showing the full scope of what happened on 9/11 is just “too unbearable.”<sup>243</sup> The estimates of people who died jumping from the World Trade Center range from a conservative count of fifty to as many as two hundred individuals.<sup>244</sup> Despite numerous eye-witness accounts, the New York Examiner’s Office prefers not to attribute the cause of death of anyone in the World Trade Center to jumping; rather they were “forced out” or “blown out” of the building.<sup>245</sup> Not only did potential media-consumers agree with the decision to self-censure certain images, some even went so far to say, as one individual did on an online forum that posted the picture of the falling man, “This image is what made me glad for censoring [*sic*] in the endless pursuant media coverage.”<sup>246</sup>

Another controversial image not immediately released for publication by the photographer shows a group of young people apparently chatting and relaxing while the

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<sup>241</sup> Richard Drew, quoted in Frank Rich, “Whatever Happened to the America of 9/12?” *New York Times*, September 10, 2006, <http://select.nytimes.com/2006/09/10/opinion/10rich.html> (accessed December 28, 2007).

<sup>242</sup> Letter to the Editor in response to “Artists and 9/11; Somebody’s Son,” published October 12, 2003, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9402E5D9163FF931A25753C1A9659C8B63> (accessed December 28, 2007)

<sup>243</sup> Garrison Keillor, “Bearing Witness,” *The New York Times*, September 3, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/03/books/review/Keillor.t.html> (accessed December 28, 2007).

<sup>244</sup> Junod, “The Falling Man.”

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.



World Trade Towers smoke in the background (Figure 30.)<sup>247</sup> It was eventually published in 2005 as part of a book of 9/11 related photographs called *Watching the World Change*. The photographer, Thomas Hoepker of Magnum Photos, was troubled by the subjects in the image and explained why to the book's editor, David Friend.



**Figure 31. Photograph taken by Thomas Hoepker on September 11, 2001 (From 247.).**

“They were totally relaxed like any normal afternoon. It’s possible they lost people and cared, but they were not stirred by it.”<sup>248</sup> *New York Times* op-ed columnist Frank Rich agreed the photograph was troubling and went a step further to explain why in his column. He described the photograph as:

A snapshot of history soon to come....Traumatic as the attack on America was, 9/11 would recede quickly for many. This is a country that likes to move on, and fast. The young people in Mr. Hoepker’s photo aren’t necessarily callous. They’re just American. In the five years since the attacks, the ability of Americans to dust themselves off and keep going

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<sup>247</sup> Thomas Hoepker, “I Took That 9/11 Photo,” *Slate.com*, September 14, 2006, <http://www.slate.com/id/2149675/> (accessed February 3, 2008).

<sup>248</sup> Thomas Hoepker, quoted in Frank Rich, “Whatever Happened to the America of 9/12?” *New York Times*, September 10, 2006, <http://select.nytimes.com/2006/09/10/opinion/10rich.html> (accessed December 28, 2007).

explains both what's gone right and what's gone wrong on our path to the divided and dispirited state the nation finds itself in today.<sup>249</sup>

The group in this image appears to be doing its best to return to normal, just like the president hoped it would: "It is my hope that in the months and years ahead, life will return almost to normal."<sup>250</sup>

While Rich and Hoepker may have been perceptive in their discussion of how some in America would respond to September 11<sup>th</sup>, the reality of what occurred at that very moment in the photo was far from callousness; it was actually civic engagement. The man in the navy t-shirt is Walter Sipser and the woman next to him (second from the right) was his girlfriend at the time, Chris Schiavo. Sipser wrote to *Slate* to describe what was happening:

Earlier, she [Schiavo] and I had watched the buildings collapse from my rooftop in Brooklyn and had made our way down to the waterfront. The Williamsburg Bridge was filled with hundreds of people, covered in dust, helping one another make their way onto the street. It was clear that people who ordinarily would not have spoken two words to each other were suddenly bound together....we were in a profound state of shock and disbelief, like everyone else we encountered that day....Thomas Hoepker did not ask permission to photograph us nor did he make any attempt to ascertain our state of mind before [reaching his conclusions] five years later....A more honest conclusion might start by acknowledging just how easily a photograph can be manipulated, especially in advancement of one's own biases or in the service of one's own career.<sup>251</sup>

A photograph captures a moment in time and, as we can see from this particular photograph, may not take into account the moments before and afterwards. The reality is something admirable but the lasting image the viewer is left with is callousness. Therefore it disturbs us. That is because several years after 9/11, the images—or memes—that Americans chose to share or censor reveal a striking trend: Americans prefer to see

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<sup>249</sup> Frank Rich, "Whatever Happened to the America of 9/12?" *New York Times*, September 10, 2006, <http://select.nytimes.com/2006/09/10/opinion/10rich.html> (accessed December 28, 2007).

<sup>250</sup> George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People," September 20, 2001, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html> (accessed July 20, 2007).

<sup>251</sup> Walter Sipser, "It's *Me* in That 9/11 Photo," *Slate*, September 13, 2006, <http://www.slate.com/id/2149578/> (accessed December 28, 2007).

heroic images of 9/11 rather than those images that photographer Thomas Hoepker describes as “stir[ring] the wrong emotions.”<sup>252</sup>

## **B. WAVING THE FLAG**



**Figure 32. Displaying the flag at the Pentagon © Washington Post/Pentagon (From 253.).**

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<sup>252</sup> Thomas Hoepker, quoted in Frank Rich, “Whatever Happened to the America of 9/12?” *New York Times*, September 10, 2006, <http://select.nytimes.com/2006/09/10/opinion/10rich.html> (accessed December 28, 2007).

<sup>253</sup> Washington Post/Pentagon photo, “Attack Aftermath Images,” September 11 News.com, <http://www.september11news.com/AftermathImages.htm> (accessed February 3, 2008).



Following the attacks, what has been described as “an era of red, white and blue descended upon the nation....[with] flags seen flying from nearly every home, waving from car windows and are used as accessories or even articles of clothing (Figure 33).”<sup>254</sup>



**Figure 33. “United We Stand” yard sign (From 255.).**

Sales of flags in the few months after 9/11 increased more than 150% from the previous year.<sup>256</sup> Flag sales at Wal-Mart stores between Sept. 11, 2001 and May 23, 2002 more than quadrupled from the same period the year before.<sup>257</sup> Displaying images of the flag was in vogue for nearly a year following September 11<sup>th</sup>, with the flag representing a variety of homeland security memes. Initial research into why Americans spontaneously and collectively chose the American flag as an image to cling to following 9/11 has had

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<sup>254</sup> Maja Tarateta, “Purchasing Trends Emerge in the Post-9/11 Art Marketplace: Since the Tragic Events of Sept. 11, Demand is Increasing for Quality Patriotic, Americana and New York City-themed Art,” *Art Business News*, January 2002, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0HMu/is\\_1\\_29/ai\\_82510876](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HMu/is_1_29/ai_82510876) (accessed May 23, 2007).

<sup>255</sup> Reignbow Tracer Novelties, “Yard, House and Garden Signs to Welcome,” <http://reigninggifts.com/YardSigns.htm> (accessed February 3, 2008).

<sup>256</sup> “3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Million Dollar Ideas: Patriotic Products,” *Entrepreneur.com*, <http://www.entrepreneur.com/magazine/entrepreneursstartups/magazine/2002/January/47744-12.html> (accessed February 3, 2008).

<sup>257</sup> Steve Wiegard, “Waving the Flag,” *Sacramento Bee*, September 8, 2002, [http://www.sacbee.com/static/live/news/anniversary/waving\\_flag.html](http://www.sacbee.com/static/live/news/anniversary/waving_flag.html) (accessed December 29, 2007).

surprising results. Felicity Paxton, a post-doctoral fellow at Emory University's Myth and Ritual in American Life Center, questioned residents in various neighborhoods of Atlanta to find out why each chose to display a flag. What Paxton found is that "the flags don't mean the same thing from house to house, even in the same neighborhood. In some cases, it is a symbol of grief and mourning. In other cases, it is a display of patriotism, unity and support of U.S. policy."<sup>258</sup>

At some point, a number of people took their flags down. One citizen interviewed by Paxton explained what he was thinking:

The first few weeks, everybody was just trying to make sense of what happened and the whole tragedy . . . it was for that, respect for all those people who died. I took it down after, I think it was two weeks, because the current of the country was changing from grief to action. I took it out because I didn't want it to be construed as me agreeing with everything the government was doing.<sup>259</sup>

The choice to continue to display the flag became more difficult especially after the military fighting began in Afghanistan. Then the flag could be construed as supporting the troops (Figure 34)<sup>260</sup> or supporting United States policies in general (Figure 35).<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Elizabeth Kurylo, "Paxton Examines Post-9/11 Flag Bearing," January 22, 2002, *Emory Report*, [http://www.emory.edu/EMORY\\_REPORT/erarchive/2002/January%20erJan.22/1\\_22\\_02paxton.html](http://www.emory.edu/EMORY_REPORT/erarchive/2002/January%20erJan.22/1_22_02paxton.html) (accessed December 29, 2007).

<sup>259</sup> Citizen Comment, "Pledge of Allegiance" exhibit, Emory University Myth and Ritual in American Life Center, <http://www.marial.emory.edu/exhibitions/pledge/page1.html> (accessed December 29, 2007).

<sup>260</sup> Trouve Staffing, "Careers," <http://www.trouvestaffing.com/Jobs.html>, (accessed February 3, 2008).

<sup>261</sup> "Honoring the Flag or Desecrating It?" SIVACRACY.NET: Politics Archive, July 31, 2005, <http://www.futureofthebook.org/politics/> (accessed February 3, 2008).



**Figure 34.** Image located on an environmental and engineering staffing agency website (From 260.).



**Figure 35.** Wearing the flag to make a point (From 261.).

For those who see the flag as representing American policies, as the woman in Figure 36 does, attacking the flag becomes a powerful way to symbolically attack United States policies.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Messtiza, "Nos Unimos," April 2, 2003, [http://www.messtiza.com/blog/2003\\_04\\_01\\_archive.html](http://www.messtiza.com/blog/2003_04_01_archive.html) (accessed February 3, 2008).



**Figure 36. A Bolivian indigenous woman whips an American-like flag as hundreds of indigenous protest against the US led war and against the U.S. aligned Bolivian government politics in the streets of La Paz, Bolivia on Thursday, March 27, 2003. AP Photo/Dado Galdieri (From 262.).**

In keeping with the wide range of meanings individuals attach to the American flag, there continue to be variations in how the flag meme is used post-9/11. The messages are often very clear, such as the way the flag image was used on a T-Shirt worn at a local swim meet in McHenry County, Illinois (Figure 37)<sup>263</sup> or in the poster in Figure 38.<sup>264</sup>



**Figure 37. T-shirt seen at a local swim meet in McHenry County, Illinois (From 263.).**

<sup>263</sup> McHenry County Blog, February 10, 2007, [http://www.mchenrycountyblog.com/2007\\_02\\_01\\_mchenrycountyblog\\_archive.html](http://www.mchenrycountyblog.com/2007_02_01_mchenrycountyblog_archive.html) (accessed February 3, 2008).

<sup>264</sup> FullosseousFlap's Comments on the Dental World and More, "Impeach Bush Watch: Impeachment Nutters Begin," November 9, 2006, <http://flapsblog.com/?p=3763> (accessed February 3, 2008).



**Figure 38. “Impeach Bush” (From 264.).**

Other messages may be a bit more abstract. For instance, the band *Smashing Pumpkins* 2007 music album, “Zeitgeist” uses two very strong patriotic images on the front and back covers to convey its message about the Zeitgeist of today: the Statue of Liberty appears to be surrounded by the rising flood waters of blood, which is staining her dress, and the blood has drenched the American flag on the back cover (Figure 39).<sup>265</sup>



**Figure 39. The front and back covers of Smashing Pumpkins album "Zeitgeist" (From 265.).**

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<sup>265</sup> FreeCovers.net, “Smashing Pumpkins: Zeitgeist,” <http://www.freecovers.net/view/1/5179e8bae8dda54c558601999eab0c17/back.html> (accessed February 3, 2008).



The defining characteristic of a meme is whether it is capable of reproducing itself and not whether the idea it represents is true or characterized accurately. Whether worn or waved, the replication and variations of the American flag meme convey a wide range of strong messages following 9/11 and do so in a manner consistent with memetic theory.

### C. THE HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY SYSTEM MEME

The final image this chapter will discuss is one of the original memes created by the United States Government following 9/11—the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS). The original HSAS meme, both in written and visual representation, has transcended its original official purpose to become a hieroglyphic with rich cultural meaning. No other meme related to homeland security has permeated our popular culture to the degree of the HSAS. As a reminder, the original meme represented in Figure 40 consists of different color-coded levels to indicate the terrorist threat to homeland security.<sup>266</sup>

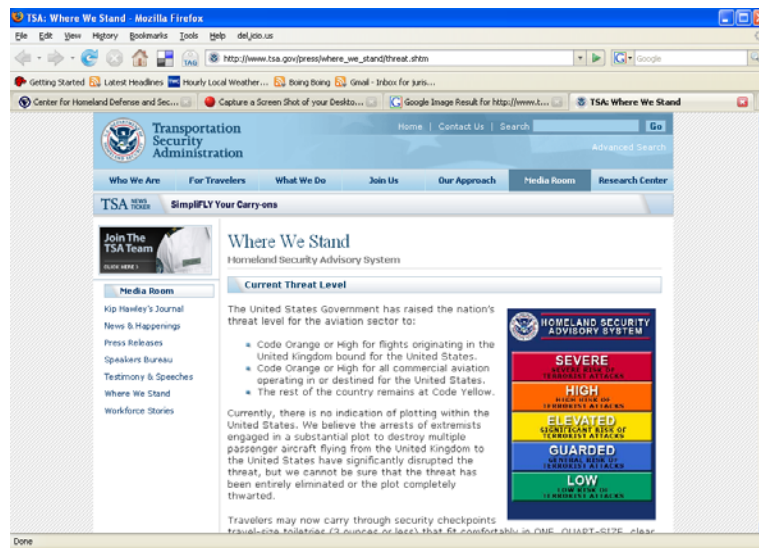


**Figure 40. Homeland Security Advisory System (From 266.).**

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<sup>266</sup> *Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-3* (Washington D.C.: The White House, March 12, 2002), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/03/20020312-5.html> (accessed February 13, 2008).

The HSAS meme has demonstrated an excellent record for copying-fidelity because the basic pattern of this meme has remained recognizable from its original transmission from the White House to host after host. Some hosts replicate the meme exactly, evidenced by its literal expression on numerous websites that profess to reliably share homeland security-related information with the public. Many of these websites are hosted by federal agencies, such as the Transportation Security Administration (Figure 41), state government sites such as the Pennsylvania Office of Homeland Security (Figure 42), and local entities such as the Sherriff's Office of Camden County Georgia (Figure 43).<sup>267</sup>



**Figure 41. Screen shot of Transportation Security Administration website (From 267.).**

<sup>267</sup> Transportation Security Administration, "Where We Stand," [http://www.tsa.gov/press/where\\_we\\_stand/threat.shtm](http://www.tsa.gov/press/where_we_stand/threat.shtm) (accessed February 3, 2008); Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Office of Homeland Security, "HSAS Information," <http://www.homelandsecurity.state.pa.us/homelandsecurity/cwp/view.asp?a=437&q=148361> (accessed February 3, 2008); Camden County Sherriff's Office, "Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS)," [http://www.camdensheriff.org/crime\\_prevention/hlsasystem.cfm](http://www.camdensheriff.org/crime_prevention/hlsasystem.cfm) (accessed February 3, 2008).



**Figure 42. Screen shot of Pennsylvania Office of Homeland Security website (From 267.).**



**Figure 43. Screen shot of Camden County Sheriff's Office website (From 267.).**

The purpose for passing this meme along is to replicate as closely as possible the original meme and desired effect of the meme upon the receiver. However, not everyone wants to pass on the meme exactly. A number of people have engaged in meme-engineering. In nearly every HSAS meme that has been engineered, the multi-colored advisory framework is retained. The most basic changes to the meme have been to



translate the “jumble of government jargon into something they [the public] can understand.”<sup>268</sup> This was the approach taken in Figure 44 below.<sup>269</sup> [Note: the figures that follow may contain words or images considered offensive by some.]



**Figure 44. The Simpsons’ Homeland Security Advisory System (From 269).**

At times it is obvious based on the meme itself what the intentions are of the meme engineer but other times need some explanation. To illustrate, in Figure 45, a meme engineer explored the change-producing forces that affect Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff: “In a very frank conversation with the *Chicago Tribune*’s editorial board, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff told the nation his “gut feeling” is

<sup>268</sup> Biff Yeager, “Unsecured Insecurities,” [mentaldischarge.com](http://mentaldischarge.com), May 30, 2002, <http://mentaldischarge.com/1003> (accessed October 27, 2007).

<sup>269</sup> Travis, “Fox and Tom Ridge: A Match Made by Murdoch,” *Rear Window Ethics*, November 1, 2004, [http://rearwindowethics.blogspot.com/2004\\_11\\_01\\_archive.html](http://rearwindowethics.blogspot.com/2004_11_01_archive.html) (accessed February 3, 2008).

that something Al Qaeda [sic] is afoot this summer. A DHS cafeteria employee then rang us to fill us in on the new Homeland Security Threat Level system.”<sup>270</sup>



**Figure 45. Hot Dog Homeland Security Advisory System (From 271.).**

Likewise, in the “Monster Scale” HSAS meme (Figure 46), the meme engineers used images of various monsters to graphically illustrate how likely it is that a terrorist attack will occur, with a detailed explanation of why each monster was chosen on their website.<sup>271</sup>

<sup>270</sup> Ryan Singel, “Homeland Security Advisory Level Raised to Chicago Dog with Everything,” July 11, 2007, <http://www.boingboing.net/2007/07/08-week/> (accessed October 18, 2007).

<sup>271</sup> Brian Olexy and Ben Garvey, [www.bengarvey.com](http://www.bengarvey.com), February 20, 2003, <http://www.bengarvey.com/?m=200302> (accessed October 31, 2007).



**Figure 46. Homeland Security Advisory System Monster Scale (From 272.).**

Other HSAS memes not only spoof the original image of the HSAS, but poke fun at the underlying concepts of this threat advisory system. For example, in Figure 47, meme engineers take a cynical look at how the Bush Administration reacts to various threats and lampoon the official White House description of the “Protective Measures” federal government personnel will take at different threat levels.<sup>272</sup>

<sup>272</sup> Biff Yeager, “Unsecured Insecurities,” [mentaldischarge.com](http://mentaldischarge.com), May 30, 2002, <http://mentaldischarge.com/1003> (accessed October 27, 2007); The Randi Rhodes Show, “Message Board: Terror Attacks,” August 12, 2006, <http://forums.therandirhodesshow.com/index.php?showtopic=94656&mode=threaded> (accessed February 3, 2008).



**Figure 47. Protective Measures Homeland Security Advisory and Bush Homeland Security Advisory System (From 272.).**

Another variation of the HSAS meme was created as part of an online competition to demonstrate skilled use of photo-altering software. One of the winning results took liberties with the HSAS meme to comment on the contemporary trend to commercialize activities. To do so, the engineer took a real photograph of Tom Ridge at the official press conference announcing the HSAS and then altered it to show the HSAS as if presented by its corporate sponsor, GAP clothing (Figure 48).<sup>273</sup>

<sup>273</sup>Wage Peace, "Iraqi War Comics," <http://www.wickedsunshine.com/WagePeace/Humour/> (accessed February 3, 2008).



**Figure 48. The Homeland Security Advisory System presented by GAP (From 273.).**

The HSAS meme has also been engineered into tangible household items. New York artist Chrissy Conant told the *New York Times* that she used to lie awake at night worrying about terrorism and decided to calm her fears by confronting them. Her solution was to design the Chrissy Homeland Security Blanket, a soft-napped, queen-size (90" x 90") blanket made by Pendleton and bearing the legend of the Homeland Security Advisory System (Figure 49).<sup>274</sup> This limited edition blanket may be purchased on eBay for \$850 and comes with a stitched leather patch that is signed and numbered by the artist.<sup>275</sup>

<sup>274</sup> Eve Kahn, "Currents: Textiles; Turning Fear on it's Head with a Soft, Cozy Blanket," *New York Times*, October 28, 2004, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B04E3D8153DF93BA15753C1A9629C8B63&n=Top/Reference/Times%20Topics/Subjects/B/Beds%20and%20Bedding> (accessed February 6, 2008).

<sup>275</sup> Ebay.com, [http://cgi.ebay.com/CHRISSY-CONANTS-Chrissy-Homeland-Security-Blanket\\_W0QQitemZ270174826660QQcmdZViewItem?hash=item270174826660&trksid=p3286.c51.m20.11116](http://cgi.ebay.com/CHRISSY-CONANTS-Chrissy-Homeland-Security-Blanket_W0QQitemZ270174826660QQcmdZViewItem?hash=item270174826660&trksid=p3286.c51.m20.11116) (accessed February 6, 2008).



**Figure 49. Homeland Security Blanket (From 275.).**

All of the HSAS memes discussed above demonstrate the three qualities that lead to a strong meme: copying-fidelity, fecundity, and longevity. No matter how silly or satirical the meme, it is still possible to recognize the original Homeland Security Advisory System meme because excellent copying-fidelity is maintained. If it were not, the meme loses its intended impact. Fecundity is reflected by the fairly robust presence of these HSAS memes on the Internet, either through replication of the image or a link to another site bearing the image. And finally, longevity is demonstrated by the fact that



every year a new HSAS meme has appeared on the Internet because somewhere, someone always seems to find a new way to make a joke about it (Figure 50).<sup>276</sup>



**Figure 50. Homeland Security Quilt (From 276.).**

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<sup>276</sup> Jessica Vitkus, "Craft the Vote!: Winning the Presidency with a Bedazzler and a Crochet Hook," *Slate*, <http://www.slate.com/id/2172095?nav=wp> (accessed February 4, 2008).

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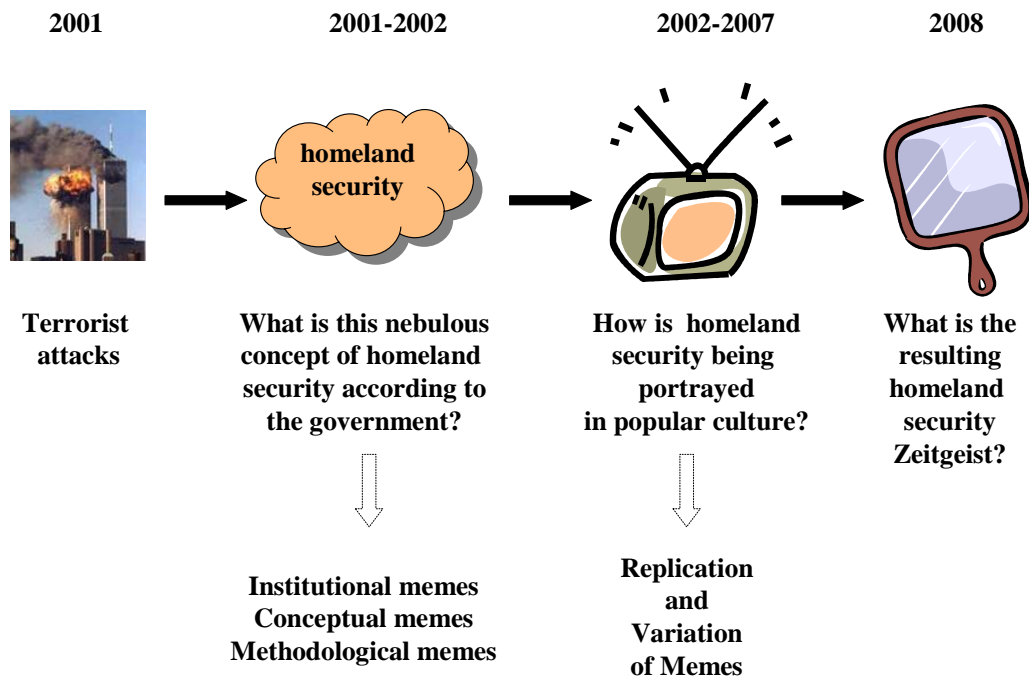
## **X. CONCLUSION: THE HOMELAND SECURITY ZEITGEIST**

### **A. INTRODUCING THE FUTURE NOW**

The government created the Department of Homeland Security out of the ashes of 9/11 to carry out those activities necessary for the protection and security of our nation's well-being. Its principal customer is the American public, followed closely by the vast array of other federal, foreign, state, tribal, and private sector entities that work together to keep our societies operational. To effectively do their mission, it is critical that government officials involved in homeland security understand how Americans perceive homeland security. Equally important is for citizens to be aware of emerging cultural patterns that affect their lives. Each of the apparently random events occurring in the lives of the imaginary couple in the introduction of this thesis—hearing airport announcements calling for personnel to be vigilant, wearing an American flag lapel pin, going through security checkpoints, watching a television show about counterterrorism—can all be considered part of a larger dynamic at work. This dynamic constitutes what the German Romantic philosophers like Hegel call the “Zeitgeist”—a manifestation of a certain worldview present at a particular period of socio-cultural progression.

To better understand this Zeitgeist and what it says about the American worldview regarding homeland security, this thesis examined aspects of popular culture to see what kind of shared and learned symbols and meanings have developed in relation to homeland security. This study was done through the examination of memes, those units of cultural transmission or imitation that are passed from person to person through text, voice, image, or sound. In this crowded world of ideas, there is fierce competition for a meme to penetrate our psyche and then be passed from person to person. The federal government introduced many new memes following 9/11 through its words, actions and images which have set the foundation for the homeland security Zeitgeist. Once they begin to circulate through popular culture, only the funniest, angriest, scariest, useful or otherwise most compelling memes continue to replicate and were likely to “stick” in a person's brain. These memes were then replicated from person to person in

aspects of popular culture, sometimes remaining intact but more often, being varied in some way. The aggregate of these homeland security memes gives form to the current homeland security Zeitgeist (Figure 51). Analyzing which memes continue to replicate may also provide the first glimpse into a future that currently “exists, but is just not widely distributed yet.”<sup>277</sup>



**Figure 51. Review of thesis methodology.**

The first meme identified was “homeland security.” Further examination of how the term has been used by government officials in word and action demonstrated that it is also appropriate to consider “homeland security” as a memplex comprised of related memes. These memes can loosely be categorized as institutional homeland security memes, conceptual

<sup>277</sup> Interview with William Gibson, National Public Radio Talk of the Nation, November 30, 1999, Timecode: 11min 55sec, [discover.npr.org/features/feature.jhtml?wflid=1067220](http://discover.npr.org/features/feature.jhtml?wflid=1067220) (accessed December 30, 2007).

homeland security memes, and methodological homeland security memes. The table below is a review of just some of the original homeland security memes generated by the government.

<b>Institutional Memes</b>	<b>Conceptual Memes</b>	<b>Methodological Memes</b>
“Homeland Security” representing the White House Office of Homeland Security	“good versus evil” binary	Using the Homeland Security Advisory System to inform the public about threats.
“Homeland Security” representing the Department of Homeland Security	“War Against Terror”	Planning for “homeland defense” by using the military to support civil authorities for homeland security.
“Homeland Security” representing a State Office of Homeland Security	America as the “righteous warrior”	“Information sharing” as a critical piece of “connecting the dots.”
“DHS” representing the Department of Homeland Security	We can prevent terrorism through better organization, communication, and spending more money.	Using immigration controls and enforcement to keep the homeland secure.
“Homeland Security” now including the US Coast Guard, US Secret Service, Immigration and Nationalization Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other well-established entities.	Congress and the White House designating 9/11 as “Patriot Day” and asking Americans to display the American flag as a symbol of American pride, unity and patriotism.	The “homeland security funding” process which gives money to state, local, and tribal governments through the Homeland Security Grant Program.
“Homeland Security Advisor” representing the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism	America as the victim of attacks because they hate our freedoms.	Counterterrorism training at all levels of government as a key part of prevention and response.
“Homeland Security Advisor” representing the Senior Advisor for a State governor on Homeland Security matters.	The public is encouraged to not give in to the fear and get back to a sense of normalcy.	“Be Ready” campaign for individual and corporate preparedness.

**Table 3. Original homeland security memes introduced through government words and actions.**

Since their creation, these memes have been replicated in popular culture, either with excellent copy-fidelity or some degree of variation. Table 4 captures several of the memes identified through researching popular culture for this thesis.

<b>Institutional Memes</b>	<b>Conceptual Memes</b>	<b>Methodological Memes</b>
“Homeland Security” or “DHS” representing the Department of Homeland Security	“good versus evil” binary	Threat advisories are a “jumble of government jargon” that are not understandable.
“Homeland Security” representing a State Office of Homeland Security	“War Against Terror”	A person can be reported to “Homeland Security” and taken away to an undisclosed location.
DHS as Orwellian Big Brother	The government is curtailing civil liberties through DHS activities.	DHS is jurisdictional and does not share information with other agencies.
DHS is an institution comprised of overbearing bureaucrats.	Security theater	The government is engaged in propaganda fear-mongering through threat warnings.
Lack of boundaries for the homeland mission of DHS.	The enemy lurks in the shadows and terrorist sleeper cells exist within the U.S.	The “homeland security funding” process which gives money to state, local, and tribal governments is a way to solve budget shortfalls.
The motto of DHS: “See All, Know All.”	Patriotism and proud to be an American	The government is engaged in nonspecific actions based on nonspecific information.
Parts of the brain may serve as the body’s “Department of Homeland Security.”	9/11 was a government conspiracy.	Government officials engaged in security theater (ineffective counterterrorism actions).

**Table 4. Homeland security memes identified in popular culture.**

While these two tables are useful for identifying the homeland security Zeitgeist, another way to envision the Zeitgeist is through the use of a Web 2.0 social networking application called a “text cloud.” A text cloud is a visual display that conveys the broad themes that emerge from textual analysis.<sup>278</sup> Originally designed as a method for Internet sites to track what items on a website are more popular than others, it has evolved in the past two years as a useful way to visualize information. An algorithm is used to measure the frequency with which certain words are used in a particular text, with the results displayed in varying fonts and size to indicate their relative value.

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<sup>278</sup> Andrew Odewahn, quoted in “Tag Cloud of ‘What is Web 2.0?’”, O’Reilly radar.com, January 18, 2007, [http://radar.oreilly.com/archives/2007/01/tag\\_cloud\\_of\\_wh.html](http://radar.oreilly.com/archives/2007/01/tag_cloud_of_wh.html) (accessed December 30, 2007). Common words were omitted such as “the”, “song”, and “television.”

Running the text of chapters five through nine of this thesis resulted in the following text cloud:

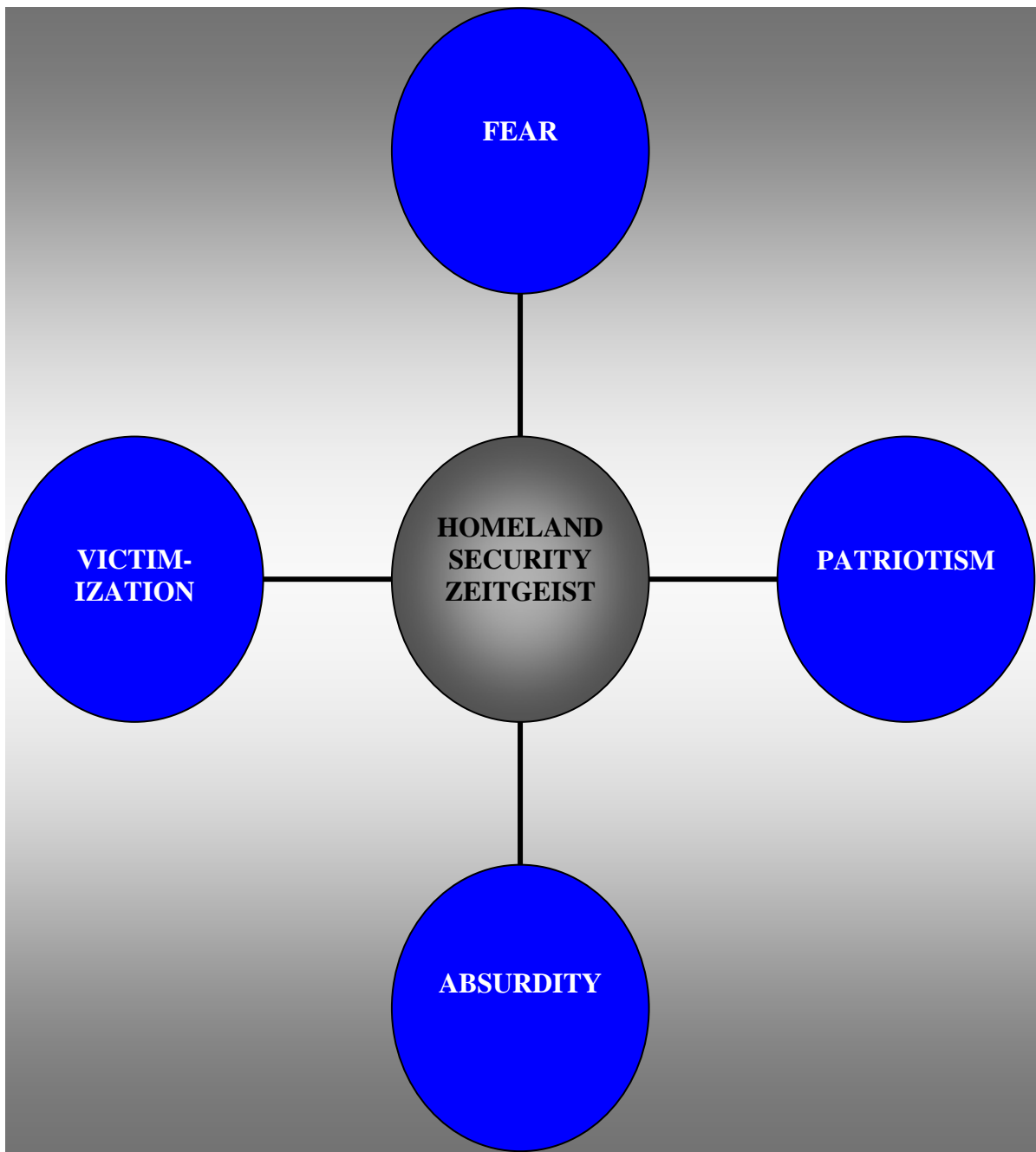


**Figure 52. Homeland Security Zeitgeist Text Cloud Generated by tagcrowd.com**

The text cloud makes it easier to recognize patterns in the memes related to homeland security. These patterns converge on four principle themes that comprise the homeland security Zeitgeist: fear, patriotism, victimization, and absurdity.<sup>279</sup> Each theme will be summarized in turn.

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<sup>279</sup> To arrive at these particular elements of the Zeitgeist, I am drawing in part on the analysis of David L. Altheide, "Consuming Terrorism," *Symbolic Interaction* 27, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 289-308.



**Figure 53.** The post-9/11 Homeland Security Zeitgeist.

## **B. ELEMENTS OF THE ZEITGEIST: FEAR**

Immediately after the attacks on September 11, 2001, President Bush gave notice to the American public that they were no longer safe: “The American people need to know that we're facing a different enemy than we have ever faced. This enemy hides in shadows, and has no regard for human life. This is an enemy who preys on innocent and unsuspecting people, runs for cover.”<sup>280</sup> This sense of an enemy lurking in the shadows or living amongst American neighborhoods as part of a sleeper cell waiting to be activated resonated through television, books, and images. In best-selling novels and prime-time television shows, terrorists are plotting and carrying out dastardly deeds to strike a blow against America. But there is also a sense of fear regarding our own government—what is it doing in secret places with secret things. When the government is not forthcoming about its methodology, perhaps out of a legitimate need to maintain secrecy, the result is that people go to the darkest places of their minds and imagine what could be going on. The result is an image of Homeland Security as an Orwellian Big Brother with the motto “See All, Know All,” taking innocent people “down the rabbit hole as a suspected terrorist,” perhaps even to torture them.

## **C. ELEMENTS OF THE ZEITGEIST: PATRIOTISM**

Immediately after 9/11, there was a pervasive need to express outrage, grief, and solidarity. Americans rallied around their televisions to watch the Hollywood orchestrated telethon, *America: A Tribute to Heroes* and sing with gusto the words to Lee Greenwood’s “Proud to Be an American.” Spontaneously, the flag became the collective symbol of this new American unity within popular culture. Virtually overnight, flags appeared on houses, cars, and clothing. However, there was never universal agreement about what these flags represented. For some, they represented solidarity with the victims and our new cultural heroes—firefighters and police officers. For others, the flag came to represent support for broader American objectives and policies, both domestically and

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<sup>280</sup> U.S. Executive Office of the President, “Remarks by President Bush at Photo Op” (Washington D.C.: The White House, September 12, 2001), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010912-4.html> (accessed December 19, 2007).

abroad. As people began to question the hand-off of the homeland security mission to soldiers fighting in a controversial war in Iraq, the flags began to disappear. Those who publicly questioned the policy decisions of the president, such as Natalie Maines of the Dixie Chicks, were branded by some as traitors. This leads to an unsettling condition in popular culture today—if you love your country but disagree with its policies, what is the appropriate way to be a patriot? Should you allow the civil liberties of some to be curtailed, such as in season six of *24*, on behalf of the greater good?

#### **D. ELEMENTS OF THE ZEITGEIST: VICTIMIZATION**

The attacks on 9/11 caught America by surprise and many Americans were wondering the same question asked by the student on the *West Wing* episode, “Isaac and Ishmael,” “Why do they hate us?” The attacks were immediately framed not as an “attack on the West” but rather as an “attack on America.” This was an American story, with America as the victim of a senseless and outrageous attack by an outsider enemy. The perpetrators of 9/11 were quickly portrayed as “enemies of freedom...who committed an act of war against our country,” and the fight becomes one of “good versus evil.” As the victims of an unprovoked attack, Americans were justified in carrying out the revenge that Toby Keith called for in his song, “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue (The Angry American).” There have been few attempts within popular culture song, television, and images to try and understand the motivations of those who hate Americans. Songs like “John Lindh’s Blues” and television shows such as Showtime’s “Sleeper Cell,” are the exception in that they try to present some of the complex dynamics involved in terrorism.

#### **E. ELEMENTS OF THE ZEITGEIST: ABSURDITY**

During an interview with security consultant Bruce Schneier, the head of the Transportation Security Agency (TSA), Kip Hawley, joked that:

Screening ideas are indeed thought up by the Office for Annoying Air Travelers and vetted through the Directorate for Confusion and



Complexity, and then we review them to insure that there are sufficient, unintended irritating consequences so that the blogosphere is constantly fueled.”<sup>281</sup>

He then went on to say in all seriousness and in defense of TSA policies, “Imagine for a moment that TSA people are somewhat bright, and motivated to protect the public with the least intrusion into their lives, not to mention travel themselves.” Hawley may have spoken these words intending to build public confidence in the people who are responsible for the nation’s security. However, for many Americans, it is hard to imagine such competency exists with homeland security methods continuously ridiculed in books, television, and images found across the Internet. From the skits on Saturday Night Live like “Homeland Security Refresher,” to the parodies of the Homeland Security Advisory System transmitted on the Internet, the decisions of homeland security officials appear to be based on what Schneier has labeled “security theater”—highly visible but ineffective anti-terrorism or other protection and precaution measures.<sup>282</sup> The result? When Homeland Security is not used as a plot device to strike fear, it is used as the punch line of a joke.

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<sup>281</sup> “Conversation with Kip Hawley, TSA Administrator (Part 1),” Schneier on Security weblog, July 30, 2007, [http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2007/07/conversation\\_wi\\_4.html](http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2007/07/conversation_wi_4.html) (accessed August 1, 2007).

<sup>282</sup> “Security Theater,” Double-Tongued Dictionary, [http://www.doubletongued.org/index.php/dictionary/security\\_theater/](http://www.doubletongued.org/index.php/dictionary/security_theater/) (accessed January 3, 2008).

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## **XI. OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This thesis only scratches the surface of exploring how America has responded and adapted to 9/11. To paraphrase the words of media scholar John Hartley, this thesis provides just some of the knowledge needed for the reader to follow up with the crucial task of exploring how these memes and the Zeitgeist play a part in determining how we see the world, how we act in it, and how we behave to other people.<sup>283</sup> This is both a societal and a personal activity and readers are encouraged to explore the ideas raised in this thesis from their personal and professional perspectives. To facilitate further research, the author offers a selection of issues identified while researching this thesis related to following fields of study and practice: cultural evolution, memetics, popular culture analysis, strategic communications, and homeland security. These questions are offered in the hope that this thesis can serve as the beginning of a continued dialogue about the socially constructed reality called the “Homeland Security Zeitgeist.”

### **A. CULTURAL EVOLUTION**

Was there a fundamental shift in American culture following 9/11? Initial research done for this thesis indicates perhaps not. The Principle of Stabilization found in cultural evolution theory holds that a culture at rest tends to stay at rest and maintain the status quo. While there is evidence of a short-lived change in culture following 9/11, such as individuals listening to more patriotic music and displaying the American flag, the events of 9/11 did not appear cataclysmic enough to cause a lasting evolutionary shift in our culture. To the contrary, the Bush administration’s goal of maintaining a state of normalcy in American society appears to have worked. While exploring this issue, scholars may want to consider whether there may be some connection to an element noticeably missing from the homeland security Zeitgeist—the concept of “sacrifice.” This is in stark contrast to the World War II Zeitgeist, during which Americans made deep sacrifices on the home front to support those on the war front. A comparison of

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<sup>283</sup> John Hartley, *Understanding News* (London: Routledge, 1982), 10.

American culture following 9/11 with the attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent World War II may provide more insight into the evolution of American culture.

## **B. MEMETIC THEORY**

Early stages of memetic theory focused on memes as replicators, behaving much the way that a gene does in evolutionary biology. Since that time, there has been little success finding examples of using a meme to explain or cause something, making it difficult to find relevance for leaders and managers. However, there appears to be a shift occurring in the field to move away from the evolutionary selection process and view a meme as evidence of an environmental niche.<sup>284</sup> The meme becomes an index to represent a broader coalition of symbols and context, and the extent the meme spreads through a particular niche can help measure success of a particular strategy, identify boundaries of human behavior, and perhaps even help identify patterns that can be predictive for future behavior.<sup>285</sup> This may be particularly useful within the developing field of homeland security. For example, once aware of memes related to homeland security, is it possible to track the shape of the Zeitgeist? How is it possible for a small group of actors to create extensive results? Why are particular ideas more attractive than others and likely to spread? And how should society or individuals respond to toxic memes (such as martyrdom)? Research into these topics is ongoing in a variety of scientific and social disciplines, but memetics may provide a common language and framework to synthesize it for homeland security application.

## **C. THE IMPACT OF POPULAR CULTURE**

David Heyman, a homeland security expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, observed that while millions of people around the world know about the show *24* and its counterterrorism hero Jack Bauer, very little attention is paid by the American public to the real counterterrorism work done by the Department of

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<sup>284</sup> Michael Lissack, "The Redefinition of Memes: Ascribing Meaning to an Empty Cliché," *Journal of Memetics-Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission*, 8, (2004), <http://jom-emit.cfpm.org/2004/vol8/lissack.html> (accessed November 27, 2007).

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

Homeland Security.<sup>286</sup> This perception is also shared by the head Hollywood liaisons for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Defense, and Central Intelligence Agency, who all agreed that they believed Americans get much of their information about the inner workings of government from popular culture. If true, what does this mean for homeland security officials? For example, do 24 and other television shows set false expectations about how fast and easy it is to battle terrorists and other threats against the nation?<sup>287</sup> Or are American viewers savvy enough to know the difference between fact and fiction (Figure 54)?<sup>288</sup>

Due to space limitations, this thesis focused only on select aspects of popular culture. Expanding the scope of analysis to include other forms of popular culture such as film, news talk shows, plays, comics, and commercial advertising is likely to provide a more comprehensive index of memes for analysis. In turn, this could serve to either reinforce or alter the findings of this thesis regarding the homeland security Zeitgeist, as well as the premise that popular culture does impact how an individual perceives homeland security.

#### **D. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

The support and cooperation of the public are critical factors to consider with any homeland security emergency response and long-term recovery effort. If popular culture can serve as an indication of public concerns on a continuing basis, the findings presented in this thesis may assist homeland security officials assess the underlying causes of these concerns and develop an effective public dialogue regarding homeland security. What memes did the government want to stick in people's minds when first introduced and do they continue to replicate? Or in the alternative, are there undesirable memes that continue to replicate that may negatively impact the public's willingness to cooperate during an emergency? For example, did certain homeland security memes appear in

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<sup>286</sup> "'24' and America's Image in Fighting Terrorism: Fact, Fiction, or Does it Matter?" *Heritage Foundation*, June 23, 2006, <http://www.heritage.org/Press/Events/ev062306.cfm> (accessed April 15, 2007).

<sup>287</sup> Associated Press, "Chertoff Says Homeland Security no '24'," *msnbc.com*, June 23, 2006, <http://www.msnbc.com/id/1350071/> (accessed June 27, 2007).

<sup>288</sup> Photograph taken by Richard A. Lipski for the *Washington Post*, November 4, 2007.

popular culture following known events like the raising of the homeland security alert level, Hurricane Katrina, or the fake FEMA news conference? If that is the case, what are appropriate policy responses and methods for engaging the public?

## **E. HOMELAND SECURITY**

Who is responsible for defining homeland security and how should it be defined? When the response to the post-9/11 question of “why do they hate us” continues to be the generalized response “because of our freedoms,” the public is not confronted with the everyday realities of history, culture, politics, and the social justice implications of American policies related to homeland security.<sup>289</sup> The result is a perpetuation of the attitudes portrayed in the *South Park* episode where the South Park Elementary School children meet Afghan children in a war-torn village. While dodging a U.S. bomb attack, the Afghan children tell the South students, “Over a third of the world hates America.” “But why?” ask the Americans, “Why does a third of the world hate us?” to which the Afghan kids reply, “Because you don’t realize that a third of the world hates you.”<sup>290</sup> The terrorist attacks on 9/11 were the impetus for the creation of this new field of study and practice called “homeland security.” Although still a new field, it draws upon the mature fields of many professions, including engineering, political science and policy, decision science, and health and medicine. This thesis strove to demonstrate the advantage of considering homeland security as part of a larger interdisciplinary framework, drawing upon the best of what each discipline has to offer. Should this interdisciplinary approach continue to be emphasized so as to provide broader context to the concepts and actions related to homeland security? And if so, who should participate in the process of defining homeland security?

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<sup>289</sup> Joseba Zulaika, “The Self-Fulfilling Prophecies of Counterterrorism,” *Radical History Review*, Issue 85, (winter 2003): 191-99, 195.

<sup>290</sup> As quoted in Spigel, “Entertainment Wars,” 258.



**Figure 54.** When fact and fiction collide: the lead actor of the hit TV show *24*, Kiefer Sutherland (right), talks with Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff (left), prior to filming scenes for *24* in downtown Washington, D.C. on November 4, 2007. Photo by Richard Lipski. (From 288.).

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## APPENDIX:      HOMELAND SECURITY MEMES ON TELEVISION

Television Series	Episode	Date first aired	Homeland Security Memes
<i>Saturday Night Live</i>	“Cold Opening: 9/11 Tribute”	September 29, 2001	The show opened with a tribute to 9/11 rescue workers and had producer Lorne Michaels and New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani discuss whether it was okay to be funny so soon after the attacks.
<i>West Wing</i>	“Isaac and Ishmael”	October 3, 2001	A group of students touring the White House are unable to leave during a bomb threat and discuss why someone from the Middle East would want to target the United States.
<i>Saturday Night Live</i>	“Homeland Security System	March 16, 2002	The show opened with a parody of Tom Ridge announcing the new Homeland Security Advisory System.
<i>Daily Show</i>	Episode 709	February 10, 2003	With biting satire, Jon Stewart reports on the Michael Jackson alert level being raised from “mochaccino to pasty” and then analyzes the information used for the federal government recent increase in the Homeland Security Advisory System alert level.
<i>Daily Show</i>	Episode 715	February 20, 2003	Jon Stewart analyzes (lampoons) the government’s new “Be Ready” campaign.

<i>Reno 911!</i>	Terrorist Training Part 1	October 8, 2003	Two DHS employees come to the police department to give them counter-terrorism training.
<i>Reno 911!</i>	Terrorist Training Part 2	October 15, 2003	Counter-terrorism training continues and it turns out the DHS employees are con artists.
<i>Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye</i>	Homeland Security	November 2, 2003	There is a suicide bomber.
<i>The 4400</i>	The Becoming	July 25, 2004	Two homeland security agents are tasked to find out what happened when 4400 people disappeared and suddenly reappeared.
<i>The Late Show with David Letterman</i>	Episode 2218	August 4, 2004	“Tom Ridge” (played by an actor named Gerard) discusses homeland security and then breaks into song.
<i>Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry</i>	Episode 25	August 29, 2004	The poet, Jus Cus, ponders the relevance of Homeland Security.
<i>Crossing Jordan</i>	Out of Sight	October 3, 2004	Macy and Lily have a showdown with Homeland Security over a case the FBI is involved with.
<i>LAX</i>	Credible Threat	October 14, 2004	Los Angeles airport is put on a high alert because there is a credible threat of attack and the airport directors wonder what to tell the public.
<i>American Dad</i>	Threat Levels	May 1, 2005	In this animated show, the threat level is reduced on the Homeland Security Advisory System, allowing the CIA and DHS to relax their vigilance of the borders.

<i>Saturday Night Live</i>	Terrorist Warnings	December 18, 2004	Fictitious DHS spokesperson Craig Fenson (Robert De Niro) announces that hundreds of names have been collected of suspected terrorists through their hotline, mostly from high school and college students.
<i>The Daily Show</i>	Tom Ridge	May 5, 2005	Former DHS Secretary Ridge is a guest on the show and discusses the homeland security advisory system and threats to the US.
<i>Strong Medicine</i>	Clinical Risk	June 26, 2005	A patient has come in contact with a deadly poison and Kayla is forced to report it to the Department of Homeland Security.
<i>Without A Trace</i>	Showdown	September 29, 2005	FBI agents Martin and Danny are ambushed by a foreign mercenary and things get complicated when two Homeland Security agents get involved and try and make a deal with someone acting behind the scenes.
<i>Threshold</i>	Shock	October 7, 2005	Two individuals go undercover as Homeland Security agents to investigate an encounter between a Navy ship and a UFO.
<i>Charmed</i>	Kill Billie: Vol. 1	October 30, 2005	The press is bombarding the sisters (who are witches) with questions since they announced they were teaming with Homeland Security in their fight against evil.

<i>Charmed</i>	Battle of the Heroes	November 13, 2005	Agent Murphy gives the sisters their first homeland security case—searching through cold case files.
<i>Sleeper Cell</i>	All episodes	December 4, 2005-December 11, 2006	An African-American FBI agent who is a practicing Muslim goes undercover in two different terrorist sleeper cells located in Los Angeles
<i>ReGenesis</i>	Haze	May 7, 2006	Homeland security suspects 2 American scientists of preparing a bio-terrorist attack against the President and sends members of a special DHS team to investigate.
<i>Saturday Night Live</i>	Homeland Security Refresher	September 30, 2006	Comedy skit about Department of Homeland Security trainers educating TSA airport screeners about the new liquid/gel policy.
<i>NCIS</i>	Faking It	October 10, 2006	After a police stop, a driver is arrested who is a Russian national. The Department of Homeland Security claims he works for them and interferes with the investigation.
<i>South Park</i>	Mystery of the Urinal Deuce	October 11, 2006	When someone at South Park Elementary defecates in a urinal, the Principle searches for the responsible party. A student, Cartman, begins to rant that it was a conspiracy, "just like 9/11", which he had been ranting about for some time. The other students simply dismiss his claims,

			stating that he, and the quarter of the American population that believes in a 9/11 government conspiracy, are all "retarded".
<i>Jericho</i>	Federal Response	October 18, 2006	The town of Jericho, Colorado has been cut off from the rest of the world due to a nuclear attack. When the power is temporarily restored, all the residents receive a pre-recorded phone call from Homeland Security telling them to stay put and that help is on the way.
<i>Heroes</i>	Nothing to Hide	November 6, 2006	LA police officer Matt Parkman is congratulated by a fellow officer for his participation in the arrest of a man as part of a "FBI-Homeland Security bust."
<i>Heroes</i>	Seven Minutes to Midnight	November 13, 2006	Two law enforcement officers race against time to interview a suspect who has been wrongly labeled a terrorist suspect. "He's got one hour before Homeland Security sends him down the rabbit hole as a suspected terrorist," one of the officers says to the other.
<i>Boston Legal</i>	Nuts	January 16, 2007	Senior legal partner, Denny, is outraged when he is not permitted to board a plane because his

			name is on a “no fly” list and asks another lawyer in the firm, Alan, for help suing DHS.
<i>NCIS</i>	Sharif Returns	January 23, 2007	When the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) team discovers that 10 kilograms of highly toxic chemical weapons are now in the hands of a wanted terrorist, they have to try and find him before an attack occurs. The team does not contact the Department of Homeland Security because it is a “non-specific threat” and instead continue to work the case within NCIS.
<i>Law and Order: Criminal Intent</i>	Episode 30	February 27, 2007	A reporter is poisoned with Polonium-210 and the FBI joins the New York City Police in a city-wide search as political pressure mounts from both the mayor and DHS to find the source.
<i>Crossing Jordan</i>	Post Hoc	April 18, 2007	Jordan is recovering from brain surgery but suffering hallucinations she tries to hide. Her friends take turns caring for her and when her friend “Bug” does not show up, they soon realize it is because he is in the custody of DHS. His friends try to clear him of suspicion but are met with hostility by DHS officials.

<i>Crossing Jordan</i>	In Sickness and Health	April 25, 2007	Bug struggles with his experience with Homeland Security and refuses to talk about it.
<i>NCIS</i>	Angel of Death	May 22, 2007	When Jerry returns from her European trip, the entire NCIS team is forced to take a Homeland Security polygraph test.
<i>The Closer</i>	Homewrecker	June 18, 2007	LAPD uses DHS grant funds to resolve a budget shortage within the homicide division by dual-hatting the detectives as a homeland security counterterrorism unit.
<i>The Closer</i>	Lover's Leap	August 27, 2007	Brenda's homicide investigation team battles with the FBI for jurisdiction when a woman found dead at the bottom of a ravine is determined to be a DHS accountant.
<i>TALKSHOW with Spike Feresten</i>	Season 2 Premiere—Ryan Seacrest	September 15, 2007	Spike goes to Venice Beach to help with homeland security.
<i>Law and Order: Special Victims Unit</i>	Savant	October 16, 2007	The Department of Homeland Security refuses to disclose information regarding the whereabouts of one of its employees suspected of a brutal assault.
<i>30 Rock</i>	Somebody to Love	November 15, 2007	Liz believes her Middle Eastern neighbor is a terrorist and reports him to Homeland Security, creating a big mess.

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